MYSTICISM OF GURU NANAK

THESIS

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

The study of Guru Nanak as a mystic is a new venture in the research field and almost a pioneering assignment. So far no research project in Panjabi literature has dealt with mysticism as a movement related to some particular age or a representative class of writers in the same line or even with regard to some individual mystic poet of note and worth. The present study, therefore, had to break a new ground and to discover new modes and patterns of research. And this has been no easy task. Even the simple fact of Guru Nanak being a mystic, par excellence, needed to be ascertained, and established, as it has been too common a practice with writers to call him a reformer or a prophet or a founder of religion or a great moral and spiritual force. No scholar, with the notable exception of Dr. W.H. Mcleod, has gone deeper than the surface to discover his mystical quality and nature and thus to see him in the true perspective by placing him at once in the class of the greatest mystics of the world, i.e. with Socrates and Plato, with Christ and Mohammed, with Plotinus and Eckhart, with Krishna and Shankar, with Rumi and Hafiz, with Ramanand and Kabir.

Mysticism, for most people, is a mystifying subject and a baffling study. In the present age of science with its unprecedented atomic and space potentialities, mysticism seems to be a thing of the past and a legacy of the good old days when men actually believed with all their heart and soul

in the divine reality underlying the universe and also dwelling inside the feeling and perceiving man. But it does not imply that with the phenomenal progress and apotheosis achieved by the modern Science, the "perennial philosophy" (to use a term coined by Aldous Huxley) of mysticism has lost its relevance in this age of mechanism and robot. The spiritual impulse deeply ingrained and inherent in the inmost nature of man has always been asserting itself in the past and will ever continue to inspire and enthral the seeking humanity.

This encouraging fact is a sure guarantee and sign for the continuance of the study of religion in its deeper mystical aspects, especially when we consider that the world is fast heading towards a universal culture and a universal religion; and mysticism in its widest ethical and altruistic sense, is the only possible solution to the cultural and religious problem (or crisis?) facing the present world.

Men cannot live by bread alone. They also need something to feed their famished, parched emotions and sentiments. Without a spiritual - mystical anchor to sustain them, men would always feel lost and enervated. However, tough and aggressive they may become in the physical sense, it is the inner strength and fortitude that can give them lasting solace and peace. Hence the inevitable need for a basic and true religion, which can only be mystical religion, not formal or ritualistic.

Guru Nanak has given to the world a soothing message and a saving promise which stem from his truly divine dispensation and his deeply mystical revelation. He is divinely human and humanly divine and, thus, a Perfect-man or a God-man, in the truest sense of the term.

All that stands revealed and divinely epitomized in the Word (or Bani) of Guru Nanak -- all that forms the content and meaning in Guru Nanak's thought expressed so beautifully and artistically in his poetry, is unquestionably mystical in its nature and essence, from whatever angle and attitude we may study it. It would be tendentious to call it philosophy, fallacious to name it metaphysics, naive to describe it as ethics and social reform and blasphemous to regard it as merely a church and a theology. It is all mysticism from the beginning to the end, from the Alpha to the Omega, just as Dr. Mohan Singh Dewana calls Sikhism "All Mysticism". This discovery or realization about Guru Nanak forms the true thematic basis of the thesis in hand.

The writer of these lines is deeply indebted to the sympathetic cooperation and painstaking guidance afforded by his supervisor, Dr. S. S. Kohli, Senior Professor and Head of the Department of Panjabi, Panjab University, Chandigarh. He is also thankful to the Librarian, Guru Nanak University, Amritsar and to some of his colleagues and friends for their assistance in many ways in the final preparation of the thesis.

Dewan Singh

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ABBREVIATIONS

AG. The Adi Granth

IPH Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, Vols.2

MK Kahn Singh Nabha, Bhai, Gurshabad Ratanakar Mahan Kosh, 2nd Ed., Patiala, 1960.

SSWS Selections from the Sacred Writings of the Sikhs, trans. Trilochan Singh and others (London: Allen and Unwin), 1960.

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CHAPTER I

MYSTICISM: ITS NATURE AND TYPES

Mysticism, generally speaking, is of two types, higher and lower. We are here, of course, concerned with the former.

Before stating what mysticism means and stands for, in the technical parlance and in essence, it would be useful and pertinent to point out what mysticism is not.

MYSTICISM AND ALLIED FIELDS.

Mysticism is often confused with spiritualism, theosophy, clairvoyance, clairaudience, hypnotism, even with occultism and magic;[1] in fact, with many modern experimental cults in the field of 'psychism' 'para-psychology' and, what is called 'psychologism'. These are all esoteric abnormalities, psychic aberrations and morbid phenomena which cannot be accepted or allowed to pass in the name of mysticism proper.[2]

William James goes so far as to say that "the words 'mysticism' and 'mystical' are often used as terms of mere reproach, to throw at any opinion which we regard as vague and vast and sentimental, and without a base in either facts

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1. F.C.Happold, Mysticism, p.36. For 'theosophy' see Annie Besant, Mysticism, p.6. "Theosophy is the reassertion of Mysticism within the bosom of every living religion, the affirmation of the reality of the mystic state of consciousness and of the value of its products."

2. Nicolas Berdyaff; "Mysticism is not a refind psychologism." Quoted in Dean Inge, Mysticism in Religion, p.142.

or logic."[3]

The common usage of the term 'mysticism', as something vague and amorphous,[4] is probably owing to the literal connotation attached to this term, of being, in its original meaning and genesis, something mysterious,[5] secret, nebulous and purely subjective.[6] But in order to emphasize the true nature and meaning of the term and its spiritual and religious significance, its meaning must, perforce, be restricted and fixed.

Mysticism, being of a limitless and universal character, encompassing as it does the whole area of the conscious, subconscious and unconscious phenomena inherent in the human mind or 'psyche', its bounds interlope and intertwine with the kindred fields of Psychology, Spiritualism,

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3. Varieties of Religious Experience, p.299. S.N.Dasgupta calls it 'inferior mysticism; Hindu Mysticism, preface. Cf.W.S. Lilly, "Mysticism" (art.), Religious systems of the world,p. 631.

4. "a type of confused, irrational thinking" Happold, op.cit. p.36. See also T.P.Hughes, Dictionary of Islam; and Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics (1961) Vol.IX.

5. The word 'mystic' (and, for that matter, 'mysticism') has for its derivation the Greek word 'mysterion',i.e. mystery, which comes from the Greek verb 'muo', to shut or close the lips or eyes. (Happold,op.cit., p.18). Also see Radolph Otto, Mysticism East and West, p.141. Other variations of the Greek derivation are 'mystos' (keeping silent),'Myo' or 'Myein' (to be closed of eyes or lips). The Greek Religion of mysteries, centuries before Plato, called Orphism or oriental mystery cults, was the earliest mystical efflorescence in the West, having secret initiations and prayers as its doctrine, while the mystic was the one initiated. Inge op.cit.,p.91. Cf. also Dasgupta, Hindu Mysticism,p.16.

6. Bertrand Russell, Mysticism and Logic,p.3, quoted in W.T. Stace, Mysticism and Philosophy,p.14 "Emotion being the essence, says Russell, of mysticism, has a subjective quality, because emotions are subjective."

Metaphysics, Philosophy and Religion,[7] though it involves a natural contradiction with Science which deals merely, and exclusively with material-cum-external phenomenon. But whereas there are sufficient grounds of affinity and assimilation among these important branches of human knowledge and experience, there are also to be found considerable points of variance and divergence among them. Therefore, it is imperative to discuss their comparative natures and objectives in order to distinguish mysticism from each of them.

Mysticism and Psychology

Psychology, as a science of the mind, concerns itself mainly with the study of that part of the 'psyche' called the Ego and other related states of conscious and sub-conscious mind, including the neurotic and the aberrant, such as sex libido, schizophrenia,[8] anto-suggestion, hypnotism, clairvoyance, statis, hysteria, catalepsy,[9] ecstasy, telepathy,[10] and so on.

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7. For discussion of their inter-relationship, see Inge, op.cit. 25-27; J.D.Marquette, Introduction to Comparative Mysticism, pp.20,21 and 185; and Russell, Mysticism and Logic, p.1.

8. Inge, op.cit.,p.27.

9. Marquette, op.cit., p.185.

10. Driesch, Crisis in Psychology and Mind and Universe pp.88-104 quoted in Radhakamal Mukerjee, Theory and Art of Mysticism, p.204. "Minds are capable of a mutual supernormal transferrence of knowledge in the mental field which is something more than telepathy or clairvoyance."

Despite its recent effusions and expansions, researches and experiments and its considerable progress and apotheosis, Psychology (or rather, Para-psychology) is still groping in the dark and the areas of the deeper 'psyche' bordering on the domain of the unknown Spirit is still very much beyond its scope and purview. Jung admits the paucity of Psychological knowledge and insight, in the ultimate sense, when he says: "Psycho-analysis itself and the lines of thought to which it gives rise are only a beginner's attempt compared to what is an immemorial art in the East."[11]

Mysticism, on the other hand, is not an abnormal phenomenon, nor an outcome of reflexes and baffled desires, but rather an expression of normal human impulses.[12] It is, rather, a quest of the Unknown, a direct apprehension of the Real through immediate experience and Inner contact.

Mysticism roots itself in a psychology of inner adjustment, as Mukerjee so aptly remarks.[13] So it is psychology, with a difference. By transcending the known limits of Time, Space and Causation, mysticism acquires a higher mode of psychology. "It is quite inadequate", says Dean Inge, "to treat mysticism as a branch of psychology ..."[14] Rather, it can be said that psychology as such provides a common initial ground and a suitable correlative for the experimental and methodical study of mysticism.

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11. Quoted in Mukdrjee, Op.cit. Preface.
12. Mukerjee, op. cit., p.13.
13. Loc cit.
14. Mysticism in Religion, Preface, p.8.

Mysticism and Spiritualism

Similarly, we can easily differentiate mysticism from spiritualism — "the so called spiritualism of the evocations and the seances", as Marquette[15] calls it — because, instead of having dialoque with the souls of dead persons (by resorting to the 'ouija board' or getting help from necromancers), mysticism "seeks union with God alone."[16] Mysticism is, thus, clearly distinguishable from all aspects of 'psychism' and occultism, besides spiritualism, in so far as it discards the perception of concrete objects as its final goal and, instead, shifts its interest "from objects to their cause, from creation to the creator."[17]

Mysticism and Metaphysics

Passing over, from the nebulous psychical fields, to the rational and intellectual areas of Metaphysics and Philosophy, we, indeed, travel a great subjective distance. But here also mysticism finds itself on an alien ground. Bertrand Russell, in his famous essay, "Mysticism and Logic", defining metaphysics as "the attempt to conceive the world as a whole by means of thought"[18] connects its development with

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15. Marquette, op.cit., p.20. For the technical meaning of the term "Spiritualism", see F.Gaynor, Dictionary of Mysticism; also J. Hettinger, Telepathy and Spiritualism pp.101-102.

16. Marquette, Loc.cit.

17. Marquette, Loc.cit.

18. Op.cit. p.1.

mysticism, on the one hand and science, on the other, having recourse as it does to the interplay of two different impulses.[19] But, he says further, that the greatest philosophers tried to harmonize the one with the other with the result that philosophy can be regarded as "a greater thing than science or religion."[20] Thus we find a new term coined by Russell i.e. 'mystical metaphysics' which exalts mysticism, by implication, above science, religion, philosophy and metaphysics, inasmuch as it has a supra-rational or intuitional basis of its contact with the Supreme Reality. Bergson's advocacy of 'intuition' against 'intellect', of the 'absolute' against the 'relative'[21] is a strong justification and infallibility of the view that holds mysticism as the <u>summum bonum</u> and the <u>sine qua non</u> of all knowledge whatsoever.

This unique superiority of mysticism consists, as Russell says, in the mystic belief in 'insight' as against discursive analytic knowledge, i.e. "the belief in a way of wisdom, sudden, penetrating, coersive, which is contrasted with the slow and fallible study of outward appearance by a science relying wholly upon the senses."[22]

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19. <u>Loc.cit</u>. Russell cites Hume and Blake as examples of the two disciplines of knowledge i.e. Science and mysticism, respectively.

20. Loc.cit. The erudite philosopher. here cites two such greatest philosophers whose metaphysics rose to the uncanny heights of mysticism viz. Heraclitus and Plato.

21. Bergson, <u>Introduction to Metaphysics</u>, p.1., quoted in Russell, <u>op.cit</u>. p.14.

22. <u>Op.cit.</u>, p.8,

Russell goes so far as to say that all knowledge other than mystical, based as this latter is on the 'certainty and revalation' and on the intuitional insight, is just darkness: "What others dimly seek he knows, with a knowledge beside which all knowledge is ignorance."[23] Such is the "full light of the vision,"[24] which the mystic perceives in his state of illumination.

All metaphysical and philosophical concepts of acquiring knowledge such as ontology, epistemology, gnosis, cosmology, eschatology[25] etc., are just handmaids of the mystical process or realization, because all supra-rational speculations, leading to rational concepts and postulates, are fortuitiously based on esoteric and intuitional apprehension.

Mysticism and Philosophy

Coming to philosophy, as in the case of metaphysics, we can, with more certitude, speak of a 'mystical philosophy' or a 'philosophy of mysticism', as adumberated by great philosophico-mystical thinkers such as Heraclitus, Socrates, Plato, Plotinus, Eckhart, Spinoza, Kant, Berkley, Hegel, Nietzche, Schopehauer, Bergson, in the West and Sankaracharya, Avicenna, Al-Farabi, Al-Kindi, Ibn'al-Arabi, Al-Chazali in

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23. Ibid, p.10.

24. Loc.Lit.

25. For specific meaning of these terms, see Gaynor, Dictionary of Mysticism.

the East,[26] which provides ample proof of the closest affinity and rapprochement between these two higher branches of knowledge.

The human paucity of knowledgeability, consequent upon the peculiar conditioning of the ephemeral world, which simultaneously delimits the scope of philosophical speculation and cognition, is such a glaring fact that some of the modern philosophical thinkers are becoming increasingly conscious of it --- a fact which, for example, Korzybski has so clearly stated: "All human knowledge is conditioned and limited at present by the properties of light and human symbolism."[27] It is, indeed, mysticism that transcends and expands, by intuitive processes, the human bounds of knowledge and insight. In other words, "Mysticism opens the door of consciousness to the universal mind."[28]

Whereas philosophy, with its rationality (or ratiocination) and logicality, treats the cognitive field with circumspection and tardiness, the intuitive mysticism goes by leaps and bounds, as the poet of the East, Shaikh Mohd. Iqbal, in one of his well-known urdu verses, says:

> Love plunged dauntlessly into the fire of the Nero,
>
> While Reason is still tarrying and watchfully waiting on the edge of the balcony.[29]

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26. Cf., passim, Otto, Mysticism East and West: Inge, Mysticism in Religion; James, Varieties of Religions Experience; Stace, Mysticism and Philosophy; Mukerjee, Theory and Art of Mysticism for discussions relating to these mystical Philosophers.

27. Mukerjee, Op.Cit. p.90.

28. Ibid. p.31.

29. Be Khatar Kud para atish-i-Namrud men Ishq.
Aql hai mehv-i-tamasha-i lab-i-bam abhi.
(Bang-i-Dira).

The mystic, in his own right and his specialized tour de force, lives more intensely, feels more deeply, acts more forcefully, realizes more profoundly, even thinks more reconditely, suffers more patiently and loves more passionately than any so-called philosopher in the technical sense, not in the original in which philosophy meant wisdom of life or way of life.[30] Verily, it has been said, "The mystic does not merely conceive but also realizes, in sentiment and action, the unity of life. This is the distinction between philosophy and mysticism."[31]

To sum up this discussion, we may concur with Mukerjee who observes; "Mysticism reconciles the opposition between idealism and pragmatism, between transcendentalism and naturalism and makes the sense of the unity of all things as realized in the self, the basis of all vision and effort."[32] It is basically synthetic, not analytic, discursive or theoretical.[33]

Mysticism and Religion:

By far the closest correlative of mysticism, is religion. Both have an inter-relationship bordering on identity. Both are of the same category or genre. Both have a well-marked universalism as their sine qua non. Religion, in the singular, not plural, is what comes nearest to mysticism i.e. to the concept of the 'world-religion'. Mysticism, says

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30. Inge, Op.cit. p.152 cf. Royce: " Mystics are the only thorough-going empiricists in the history of philosophy." The world and the Individual, p.85, quoted in Marquette, Introduction to Comparative Mysticism, p.196.

31. Mukerjee, Theory and Art of Mysticism, p.41.

32. Ibid., p.303.

33. Cf. "Mysticism is not an intellectual theory ..." S.N. Dasgupta, Hindu Mysticism, preface.

Mukerjee, is one of the commonest elements in world religion.[34]

Whereas individual religions separate classes of humanity from each other on sectarian grounds, world-religion or 'the highest religion'[35] or, what is called, 'mystical religion',[36] binds and unites them together and also binds them in love to their Creator, It is this altruistic and cosmopolitan aspect of religion, in its purest and highest form that assumes the quality and role of mysticism as such; and though sometimes, in common with mysticism, it gets the odium and disrepute of aberration attributed to magic, myth and miracle,[37] yet it is the most potential and effective characteristic of religion.[38]

The essence of religion, says Troeltsch, is not dogma and idea but cultus and communion.[39] Similarly Augustus Sabatier contrasts the 'religion of authority' with the 'religion of spirit.'[40] It is indeed, this 'religion of spirit'

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34. Op.cit., Foreword.

35. Ibid. Introduction.

36. Ibid. p.15, Cf. also S.S.Raghavachar, "Hindu Mysticism," (art.) 'Hinduism' (ed.) p.67.

37. Ibid, p.1.

38. Newman: "What is religion but the system of relation between me and a supreme Being." Quoted in "Sufism",(art.) Collective Works of Max Muller, p.336.

39. Quoted in Inge, Op.cit. p.17.

40. Ibid.,p.14. William James: "In some, religion exists as a dull habit, in others as an acute fever." Quoted in T.R. Kelley, A.testament of Devotion, p.53. Cf. also the excellent treatment of this subject by Leo Tolstoy: Essays and Letters (Chap. 'what is Religion') pp. 288 et. Sqq.

that is most synonymous with mysticism.

Mysticism, remarks Dasgupta, is the basis of all religion — particularly of religion as it appears in the lives of truly religious men.[41]

It is, certainly, misleading to connect or confuse the common emotional aspect of religion, may be at its highest pitch,[42] or the instinctive, natural aspect of religion,[43] with advanced mysticism. There is, however, much intrinsic substance, both in religion and mysticism, to falsify this naivity.

Religion, thus, is not only universal in its true nature, but also compact and complete in its relevance to the endless needs and problems of mankind. "Religion in its completness," says Westcott, "is the harmony of philosophy, ethics and art blended into one by a spiritual force, by a consecration at once personal and obsolute."[44]

Emphasizing the personal and individual element of religion, on the other hand, Desgupta observes: "Religion means

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41. Dasgupta, op.cit., preface.

42. Inge, op. cit. p.8.

43. Cf.Freud: Religion at its best "is the projection of man's infantile impulses." Quoted in R.Mukerjee, op.cit., p.12. Cf. Also H.Read, Phases of English Poetry, (Chap." Poetry and Religion"), p.60. He says: "Religion represents an emotional attitude towards the university ..." Perhaps Read has in his mind the instinctive aspect of man as diffused in the emotive element. But whereas instinctive aspect of religion is elementary, mystical aspect is certainly very advanced and specialized.

44. Quoted in Inge, Mysticism in Religion, P.153. For the definition of religion, see Tolstoy, op. cit., p. 295.

a personal relationship with some divine or transcendent person to whom we submit and to whom we pray for material advantage or for spiritual or moral enlightenment."[45]

Perhaps with the attenuation of the sectarian, separatistic, dogmatic and institutional[46] aspect of religion, what remains as the subtle, ubiquitous, divine residue is what we may call 'mystical religion' or mysticism itself. "It is mystical religion", says Mukerjee, "that exposes, cultivates and enlists man's fulest potentialities, latent in the unconscious."[47]

All great religions have largely contributed to the making of mysticism,[48] if we can use this very tangible word 'making' for mysticism which is basically something intangible and amorphous.

Summing up this discussion on religion and mysticism, we can conclude that mysticism is the most developed, advanced

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45. Dasgupta, Hindu Mysticism, p.7 Toynbee regards mysticism as "personal religion raised to the highest power." Quoted in Sisirkumar Ghose, Mystics and Society, p.1.

46. For discussion of religious institutionalism and mysticism, see Dean Inge, Outspoken Essays, pp.230-236.

47. Theory and Art of Mysticism, p.15. He says further: "Religion sums up some of the profoundest feelings and experiences of man and has played a dominant part in his social development." (Ibid.p.11). John Wesley terms this 'mystical religion' as 'heart-religion' in which, he says, every great faith originated and in which each great faith lives. W.S.Lilly,"Mysticism"(art), Religions Systems of the World, p.637.

48. E.Underhill: "Though some creeds have proved more helpful to the mystic than others, he is found fully developed in every great religion." Essentials of Mysticism, p.4.

or heightened form of the principle of religion; it is the fructification of the religious effort of man -- the spiritual efflorescence of the most crucial and fundamental aspects of the human life.[49]

- II -

MYSTICISM DEFINED:

It is extremely difficult to define mysticism, the subject being so vast and limitless in the ramifications of its meaning and application.

William James advances a very cogent reason for this indefinability, viz. that the nature and data about mystic modes of consciousness are not clear and definite and being other than ordinary ones, these forms of consciousness "open a region, though they fail to give a map. At any rate they forbid a premature closing of accounts with reality."[50]

To pile up definitions and excerpts from authorities on the subject, therefore, would only add to the confusion already generic and inherent in the ineffable nature of

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49. Cf. Caird: "Mysticism is religion in its most concentrated and exclusive form. It is the attitude of the mind in which all other relations are awallowed up in the relation of the soul to God." (quoted in Inge, Mysticism in Religion, p.25). The philosopher Bradley also affirms this truth: "There is nothing more real than what comes in religion." Appearance and Reality, p.449, quoted in Inge, Ibid., p.21.

50. William James, Varieties of Religious Experience, p.388. quoted in Marquette, Introduction to Comparative Mysticism. p.19.

mysticism.[51] The mystic himself, being too much absorbed and lost in his mystical statis or ecstasy, cannot express clearly what he sees or apprehends, while the non-mystic intellectual writer knows mysticism only at second hand, as James says.[52] It is befitting, therefore, to represent, as best as one can, in symbolic language and terms, the meaning and truth of what mysticism stands for or signifies.

But before we do this, the appropriateness of the word, 'mysticism' as it is used in the technical sense (of the highest mystical experience or consciousness) has to be considered. A writer says: "Mysticism is a misnomer; its name suggests mist, something vague, foggy - hocus pocus ... We had better use the word enlightenment or illumination."[53] The common word used by Western theologians in the medieval times, says Happold, was either Contemplatio (contemplation)

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51. "In Appendix A of his Christian Mysticism (methuen) Dean Inge gives no less than twenty six definitions of mysticism." quoted in Happold, Mysticism, p.38.

52. Op.cit.,p.370. quoted in W.T.Stace, Mysticism and Philosophy, p.20.

53. W.T.Stace, op.cit., p.15. Cf. Happold: "The word 'mysticism' is not a fully satisfactory one." He further says that this word was not originally used in ancient Greece for the meaning at stood for and whereas the word 'mystical' became current in later middle ages, 'mysticism' as a term is quite modern. op.cit. p.37. Cf. also Dasgupta, Hindu Mysticism, p.16.

or Theologia mystica (mystical theology).[54]

Now from the word to the meaning. Russell, the philosopher and the sceptic, emphasizes the emotional aspect of mysticism (as against the discursive reason) and offers probably the best definition: "Mysticism is, in essense, little more than a certain intensity and depth of feeling in regard to what is believed about the universe ..."[55]

Feeling, intense and deep, is the keyword for mysticism. Almost all great writers on mysticism have accepted 'feeling' as the true sense of mystical truth, as distinguished from reason, intellect, speculation, logic gnosis, learning, education, and so on. This uncanny, mysterious, unknown 'feeling' is what leads to the highest state of consciousness or the ecstasy and opens up new spiritual vistas of experience and esoteric phenomena (in what is called synteresis i.e., the innermost, impeccable, sinless part of the soul).[56]

This 'feeling', or we may better call it, 'intuitive feeling', in the innermost heart of man, is something positive, something ingrained in the mind. In philosophical language,

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54. Happold, Mysticism, pp.36 f. The recent German distinction between two words 'Mystizismms' and 'Mystik' (the first for spiritual-psychic type and the second for the higher mysticism) is interesting. Cf. Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics Vol.IX,1961, p.83.

55. Russell,Mysticism and Logic,p.3. Cf.Lilly's interesting reference to an anecdote from 'Mesnavi Maulana Rome' (as he calls it) in which Moses regards a man as 'infidel' because he worships God as if He had a form, body, clothes, chamber etc.,and he (Moses) is reprimanded by God who ordains:"Words are nothing to me, I regard the heart." op.cit.p.636. Cf.also Guru Nanak,AG,pp.468 (Salok:Pauri 10),470 (Salok: Pauri 13), 473 (Salok: Pauri 20),474 (Salok:Pauri 22),Var Asa.

56. Inge, Mysticism in Religion, p.161.

we may call it '<u>a priori</u>, as it is always there and exists in its own right and without any external cause. Russell calls it 'mystical insight', because it is not a feeling in the ordinary sense, but something much more. He writes: "The mystic insight begins with the sense of a mystery unveiled, of a hidden wisdom now suddenly become certain beyond the possibility of a doubt."[57]

Mysticism, thus considered, has its own '<u>raison d' etre</u>'. Its concepts and achievements are absolutely independent of every other human faculty or activity whatsoever. It has its own norms and principles, its own ideals and aspirations, though a mystic never totally loses sight of the human matrix or anchorage.

Goethe calls mysticism "the scholastic of the heart, the dialectic of the feelings,"[58] What Goethe implies in his beautiful epigram, is the idea that mysticism cannot be categorically divested of thought and reason, even philosophy and logic[59] (which are the necessary media used

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57. Russell, <u>op.cit</u>.,p.9 The word 'insight' implies a 'seeing' or a 'presence'; a 'knowing' which is atonce a 'phenomenon' and a 'being'. In this mystical state the knower, the known and the knowing are all one. Max Nardau in his work "<u>Degeneration</u>" says that Mysticism means any sudden perception of hidden significance in things. Quoted in William James, <u>op.cit</u>. p.334 n.

58. Quoted in Happold, <u>op.cit</u>.,p.37 Cf. Harbhajan Singh, <u>Study and Teaching</u> (Panjabi),"Rahasvad" (Mysticism) art. pp.41 f.

59. Cf.Lasson emphasizes the noetic or intellectual quality of mystical experience when he says: "The essence of mysticism is the assertion of an intuition which transcends the temporal categories of the understanding, relying on speculative reason. Rationalism cannot condut us to the essence of things; we therefore, need intellectual vision." Quoted in Happold, <u>Mysticism</u>, p.37.

for the acquisition of knowledge and insight) but all this 'mystical' thinking and knowing is of a different quality; it is the thinking and knowing of the 'feeling' i.e. not the cognitive faculty of the mind, but the conative and the affective.[60]

This unavoidable correspondence between intellect and feeling (so important in human psychology) has so much dominated the nature and history of mysticism as realized and propounded by various mystics in the East and the West, that no discussion of mystical experience or apprehension can be devoid of this particular parallelism. Rudolph Otto, for example, has put his full weight on the side of intellect;[61] so have Dean Inge,[62] R.Mukerjee[63], E. Underhill[64] and many others; on the other hand, Bertrand Russell, William James, Goethe, Luther and others have emphasized the emotional basis of mysticism. In fact the two main types of mysticism have been put forward as 'intellectual mysticism,[65] and 'emotional

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60. Lilly Calls this type of higher or true thinking 'Godlike reason' or in the words of Marcus Aurelius, 'Diamon' i.e. the deity within us. op.cit p.638.

61. Otto, Mysticism East and West pp.30-31. He has chosen two supreme examples of intellectual (or contemplative) mysticism viz. Sankara in the East and Eckhart in the West.

62. Inge, Mysticism in Religion, p.9. He quotes Mctaggart to support his view:" A mysticism which ingnores the claims of understanding would be doomed."

63. Theory and Art of Mysticism, p.5. He gives three types of mysticism viz.(1) Fervent or emotional (2) Cosmic or nature and (3) Cool or unimpassioned.

64. E. Underhill, Essentials of Mysticism, pp.5, 117, 119.

65. Otto names the intellectual or introvertive type 'The Mysticism of Introspection' or 'the inward way'. Quoted in W.T. Stace, Mysticism and Philosophy, p.61.

mysticism' (also called extrovertive and Introvertive).[66]

Plato, Plotinus, Eckhart, Shankara, Al-Ghazali, Al-Farabi, Ibn Al-Arabi and Al-Jili are well known examples of the Intellectual (Introvertive) type and st. Paul, St.Thomas, St.Augustine, St. Francis of Assissi, St. Teresa, Luther, medieval Indian Saints and Bhagats and the typical Sufis are the famous examples of the Emotional (Extrovertive) type of mysticism.

Mysticism not only unites the 'polarities' of the mind but also correlates the inner phenomena with the outer i.e. the ideal with the real and vice versa. Marquette says that "Between the idealists and realists, mystic occupies a middle position."[67]

But still the preponderance of the 'feeling' aspect is a paramount fact, as is clear from the writings of a few important writers. To expatiate on this subject, it is necessary, first of all, to consider the unanimity or universality of 'feeling' in all men, as William James affirms in his well-known saying: "The unanimity of the mystics ought to make the critic stop and think."[68] Similarly Marquette affirms the "idea of the essential unity of all life which is the conerstone of mysticism ..."[69] Defining mysticism and highlighting its universal aspect, he adds: "The fundamental idea of mysticism

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66. Stace, op.cit.,pp.49, 61, 87.
67. Introduction to Comparative Mysticism, p.17.
68. Quoted in Inge, Mysticism in Religion, p.41.
69. Marquette, Op.cit. p.33.

is that the essence of life and of the world is an all-embracing spiritual substance which is the reality in the core of all beings, irrespective of their outer appearances or activities."[70]

Prof. Pratt says: "The milder forms of mysticism are shared by a large number of people and are quite possible, though latent, for a great many more."[71]

Mukerjee also refers to the 'totality of life and the world', involved in the mystical development, when he says: "Mysticism gradually develops into a method of knowledge and action which includes the whole of man's adjustment to totality of life and the world that he apprehends."[72]

To quote another authority on the point under reference: "Mysticism is independent of time, place, nationality and creed. In reading extracts from great mystics we might often be in doubt whether the writer was a Neo-Platonist, a Sufi, a Buddhist, a Catholic or a Quaker."[73]

'Feeling',[74] we may conclude, is the central fact that inheres in the very nature of mysticism. It is not only universal and perennial, but also synthetic, altruistic,

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70. Ibid., p.24. This 'essential unity' or 'all-embracing substance' is what Lilly calls 'a higher synthesis' (a sort of higher feeling), 'Mysticism' (art.) Religious systems of the world. p.634.

71. Religious Consciousness, p.366, quoted in Marquette, Op.cit., p.203.

72. Mukerjee, Op.cit., p.3.

73. Dean Inge, quoted in Mukerjee, Ibid., preface to 1st ed.

74. 'Feeling' may be defined as "a special form of Man's relations to objects and phenomena of reality conditioned by their correspondence or non-correspondence to his needs. " K. Platonov, Psychology, p.199.

responsive, ethical, expansive (having centrifugal[75] quality) and progressive; whereas thinking(the other form of mental activity) is discursive, analytic, dialectic, self-involved and recessive.

The second important factor in the advocacy of 'feeling' as the primary source and expression of mysticism, is its higher compatibility. It not only unites with 'thinking'[76] as and when the need arises for the apotheosis of a mystic's 'spiritual' feeling' (resulting in what we call 'contemplation' or 'imaginative thinking') but also perfectly combines this lofty state of contemplation with the 'willing' or the volitional activity[77] of the mind (which causes action and actionability), out of which is born the highest mystical state called 'ecstasy','raptus' or 'Samadhi' in which all the human faculties harmonize into a single consecrated transfiguration.

Besides what has been said above about the unique quality of 'feeling' so conducive for the growth and incidence

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75. Actually 'feeling' has a simultaneous double process,i.e. a centrifugal and centripetal inner movement. Hence its unique effectiveness.

76. 'Thinking' is defined "as mental activity aimed at generalized and mediated cognition of objective reality by disovering the connections and relations existing between the objects and phenomena." Briefly stated, it is a reflection of the connections between objects and phenomena. Ibid., p.143.

77. Sechenov: "Volition is not some impersonal agent incharge only of movement; it is an active aspect of the mind and the moral sense." quoted in Platonov, Op.cit., p. 227.

of mysticism, (viz. its universality, its compatibility, its all-inclusiveness, its altruism and moral expansion, etc.), we may also discover in it a certain quality of 'dynamism'[78] which not only affects and changes all that comes into contact with it but also colours and infects all that is. It is the vital force, the great principle of life, the Bergsonian 'elan' which sustains, inspires, uplifts and transports the mystics to regions unknown and depths unfathomed.[79] We can describe it as "the awakening of the soul in response to some unsuspected stimulus by which, as Arnold says: "A bolt is shot back somewhere in the breast, opening a way for the flood of transcend -ental consciousness to burst through."[80]

Perhaps the most important factor in the mystic feeling, is its harmonizing quality - it creats harmony out of discord, unity out of diversity, peace and repose out of conflict, divinity out of nothingness. "Mystical apprehension", says Mukerjee, "is the outcome of a harmonious blend of all the sense experience including the kinaesthetic and organic..."[81]

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78. Otto, op.cit., p.169. "This God becomes a mystical God because He is a stream of glowing vitality." Also see S. Dasgupta, op.cit.,Preface; "Mysticism is not an intellectual theory; it is fundamentally an active, formative, elevating and ennobling principle of life."

79. Cf. Bastide: "Mysticism does not mean dissociation; it is the creation of a new ego." quoted in Inge, Mysticism in Religion, p.28.

80. R.A. Nicholson, Studies in Islamic Mysticism, p.9.

81. Op.cit., Preface to 1st Ed.

This eminent writer further says: "Mysticism gradually develops into a method of knowledge and action which includes the whole of man's adjustment to totality of life and the world that he apprehends."[82]

Next to 'feeling' and 'insight', we may regard as the most important essential of mysticism, its empirical quality i.e., its direct 'attitude' towards things of life, toward God who is the 'spiritual substance'[83] underlying all that exists; its 'temper', so to say, or its 'manner'; its 'way of life'. In other words, it is the 'modus' or the mode which mystic 'feeling' or 'insight' assumes when it comes into play or when it finds symbolic expression.

To quote Supergeon: "Mysticism is, in truth, a temper rather than a doctrine, an atmosphere rather than a system of philosophy."[84]

Mysticism, thus is a sort of 'becoming', not a 'knowing'. It has no abstraction to confuse it, but a manner to display it. The mystic has a peculiar, inexorable manner of behaving which is at once dramatic and immediate. Mystic's moment is his eternity; his manner is what we call

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82. Ibid., p.3.

83. Marquette, Introduction to Comparative Mysticism, p.24 Cf. Caird: "Mysticism is the attitude of the mind in which all the relations are swallowed up in the relation of the soul to God." Quoted in Ing. Mysticism in Religion, p.25.

84. C.F.E. Spurgeon, Mysticism in English Literature, p.2.

'personality'. Mukerjee says: "Mysticism is not merely a way of understanding, it is also a way of life."[85]

Now we may consider what lies behind this manner or '<u>modus</u>' of the mystic; that is, what is at the bottom or the centre of *the mystic feeling' and 'the mystic insight'? The manner, the madness, or the ecstasy of the mystic certainly hides something, which gets betrayed sometimes (in the form of 'miracle'). The Sufi poet Ghalib says in one of his profound verses:

"O Ghalib! this ecstasy is not without reason;
There is something in it which is hides."[86]

The main concern in mysticism lies between the mystic and the Supreme Being. This simple equation has infinite ramifications. Let us consider some of the most essential among them.

Evelyn Underhill while defining mysticism directly touches this basic point: "Mysticism is the art of Union with Reality. The mystic is a person who has attained that union in a greater or lesser degree; or who aims at and believes in such attainment."[87]

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85. <u>Op.cit</u>., p.9. Cf. Russell; "Mysticism is to be commended as an attitude towards life, not as a creed about the world." <u>Mysticism and Logic</u>, p.11. Cf.also Lilly: The office of mysticism is "to conduct us from the phenomenal to the noumenal, from that which seems, to that which <u>is</u>." 'Mysticism' (art.) <u>Religions Systems of the World</u>, p.638.

86. <u>Be-Khudi be-sabab nahin Ghalib,
Kucch to hai jis ki pardadari hai</u>. (Diwan-i-urdu)

87. E.Underhill, <u>Practical Mysticism</u>, quoted in Happold, <u>Mysticism</u>, p.38.

Similarly Professor A. Seth writes: "It (Mysticism) appears in connection with the endeavour of the human mind to grasp the divine essence or the ultimate reality of things and to enjoy the blessedness of the actual communion with the highest."[88]

Dasgupta also emphasizes the spiritual aspect of mysticism when he says: "Mysticism means a spiritual grasp of the aims and problems of life in a much more real and ultimate manner than is possible to mere reason."[89]

Thus we can see that mysticism involves a going beyond or transcending ordinary reality of the world in order to grasp the spiritual reality that underlies and infuses all visible phenomena. Nettleship says: "True mysticism lies in the consciousness that everything which we experience, every 'fact' is an element and only an element in 'the fact'; i.e. that in being what it is, it is significant or symbolic of more."[90] Spurgeon, while elucidating this point, remarks that every finite intelligence becomes "a husk of a deeper truth."[91]

In fact, the mystic has not only to transcend the whole visible phenomena in order to enter the realm of the

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88. Quoted in Happold, op.cit., p.38.

89. Hindu Mysticism, Preface. We may also cite here Christ's well-known dictum: "Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven and its righteousness." Quoted in Marquette, op.cit.,p.20.

90. Spurgeon, Mysticism in English Literature, p.9. Cf. Lilly: "Mysticism is an opening of the eyes of the soul ..." op.cit., p.638.

91. Spurgeon, op.cit. p.9.

unseen Divine Being, but also, as a paramount necessity, to transcend his own self or the ego. He has to give away everything to get all. Nicholson says: "When God wishes to benefit a man, He shows to him the path of self-abasement."[92] Mysticism, says Marquette, is "none other than to attain divine communion in complete surrender of any personal ends whatsoever."[93]

There is, besides, a certain and fundamental perception of the unity underlying all diversity which all mystics claim.[94] Some perceive it in Nature, as Wordsworth, some in imagination, as Blake,[95] others in all visible things, as the pantheistic Hindu sages and saints, still others in the soul, as Shankara and Eckhart, while there are some of the highest mystics who perceive Reality directly in the apprehension of the Godhead, like Plato and Plotinus. These are some of the ways of mystical approach to the Divine Being who is absolutely 'Beyond' and 'Unknowable'. On the basis of this variation we can determine the different types of mysticism, as we shall see later.

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92. R.A. Nicholson, Studies in Islamic Mysticism p.14 Cf. The Well-known saying of Christ: "Whosoever shall seek to gain his life shall lose it but whosoever shall surrender his life shall preserve it." Quoted in Marquette, Introduction to Comparative Mysticism. p.136.

93. Marquette, op.cit. p.21.

94. Spurgeon, op.cit., p.3.

95. Loc.cit.

Mysticism "deals with the attempt to reach, while still alive, a knowledge and experience of the next world, promised by the teachings of religion and generally held to be experienced after death only."[96]

Here is thus introduced into things material and mundane a certain element of 'beyondness', of eternal values, of a Polarity of experience and life, which facts have been emphasized by some writers.

Mysicism, says Mukerjee, imports final or absolute values in t he common daily life and relations of men. Again: Mysticism is the art of finding a harmonious relationship to the whole of Reality which man envisages.[97]

Mysticism, as Otto observes, is by its nature 'polar' and is not inconsistent.[98]

Mysticism posits eternal values such as Truth, Beauty, and Goodness which are all infinite and which transcend any system of human relations.[99]

Dean Inge expresses the intrinsic meaning of mysticism in very clear words: "Mysticism means communion with God, that is to say, with a Being conceived as the supreme and ultimate reality."[100]

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96. Marquette, op.cit.,p.19.

97. Mukerjee, Theory and Art of Mysticism, pp.301-302

98. Quoted in Mukerjee, Ibid. p.7.

99. Ibid,, p.9.

100. Inge, Mysticism in Religion, p.8.

The Divine Being and the mystic's communion with Him is the sine qua non of all true mysticism -- a communion or unity which is at once intense, immediate, certain, and transporting. Pfleiderer remarks: "Mysticism is the immediate feeling of the unity of the self with God."[101]

To make the point further clear we may quote Leuba who says, mysticism is "an intuitive certainty of contact with the supersensible world."[102]

"Mysticism", says Otto, "enters into the religious experience in the measure that religious feeling surpasses its rational content, that is, to the extent to which its hidden non-rational, numinous elements predominate and determine the emotional life."[103]

R.M.Johnes, another great authority on the subject says: "Mysticism may be defined as the attempt to realize, in thought and feeling, the immanence of the temporal in the eternal and of the eternal in the temporal."[104] He further observes that mysticism "is the type of religion which puts the emphasis on the immediate awareness of relation with God, on direct and intimate consciousness of the divine presence. It is religion in its most acute, intense and living stage."[105]

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101. Quoted in Inge. Ibid., p.25.

102. Quoted in Inge. Ibid., p.153.

103. Otto, Mysticism East and West. p.141. "That strange spiritual phenomenon which we call mysticism". Ibid.,Preface.

104. Quoted in Sircar, Mysticism in Bhagavat Gita, Preface.

105. Loc.Cit.

E.Underhill defining mysticism says:

"Mysticism is not a theory of the intellect or a hunger, however, passionate, of the heart, but a definite and peculiar development of the whole self ... a re-making of the whole character on high levels in the interest of the transcendental life." 106

"Mysticism", says Sircar, "is the heightening up of life and consciousness."[107]

The common characteristics in the definitions cited above may be summed up in the following statement:

> "Mysticism is an intuitive feeling or insight, having as its source and basis an immediate awareness of the one spiritual principle underlying all life and the universe, which, as a result of direct experience of union with the Divine Being, brings about a complete reversal of values and a reawakening of the whole being and personality of the mystic into a supremely blissful fulfilment.

We may, in the end, add a few technical definitions from the outstanding dictionaries and encyclopedias:

1. "Mysticism in its simplest and most essential meaning is a type of religion which puts the emphasis on immediate awareness of relation with God, direct and intimate consciousness of divine pressence." 108

2. "The belief in the spiritual intuition of truths beyond the reach of reasoned understanding; direct contact with supernal powers without the intervention of reason or of an officiating priest." 109

3. ""Mysticism, the immediate experience of oneness with ultimate Reality. Both those who have known mystical experience and those who have only studied it, are agreed that the mystical vision is ineffable." 110

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106. Quoted in Sircar, Ibid., Preface.
107. Ibid., p.20.
108. F.Gaynor, Dictionary of Mysticism.
109. J.T.Shipley, Dictionary of World Literary Terms.
110. Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol.XV.

4. "The opinions, mental tendencies or habits of thought and feeling characteristic of mystics; mystical doctrines or spirit; belief in the possibility of union with the Divine nature by means of ecstatic contemplation; reliance on spiritual intution or exalted feeling as the means of acquiring knowledge of mysteries inaccessible to intellectual apprehension."[111]

5. "... immediate experience of a divine -- human intercourse and relationship; the first hand experience of direct intercourse with God; the theologico - metaphysical doctrine of the soul's possible union with Absolute Reality i.e. with God." 112

6. "... generally applied to all those tendencies in religion which aspire to a direct communication between man and his God, not through the medium of the senses but through the inward perception of the mind." 113

- III -

TYPES OF MYSTICISM

Besides what we earlier called higher and lower mysticism (named superior and inferior, by S. Dasgupta)[114] there have been other ways to distinguish the various types into which mysticism was divided by its exponents from time to time.

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111. Oxford English Dictionary, Vol.VI.

112. Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, ed. James Hastings, Vol.IX.

113. T.P.Hughes, Dictionary of Islam.

114. Hindu Mysticism Preface. By the higher or the superior is meant the religious mysticism which is genuine and proper while the other is psychological and pathological, thus supurious and faked. William James also affirms this twofold character of mysticism, corresponding to the higher and the lower, calling them: (i) religious mysticism and (ii)'diabolical' mysticism, Varieties of Religious Experience p.334. Cf. also C.Jinarajadasa, Nature of Mysticism quoted in S.S.Kohli, Philosophy of Guru Nanak, p.56 f.The types cited are Mysticism of (1) Grace, (2) Love, (3) Pantheistic, (4) Nature, (5) Sacramental, and (6) Theosophical. Lilly distinguishes mysticism (a) in proper theological sense and (b) the popular sense of "supersensous knowledge." 'Mysticism' (art.) Religious Systems of the World, p.631.

By far the most representative division is that based on the two fundamental elements of human sensibility viz. the feeling and the thinking (i.e. the affective and cognitive faculties of the mind).

The types based on these two subjective faculties may be called the "mysticism of love and union" and the "mysticism of knowledge and understanding".[115] In the first the urge is to escape from a sense of separation, from the loneliness of selfhood, towards a closer participation and re-union with Nature or God, which will bring peace and rest to the soul; while the other, i.e. the mysticism of knowledge and understanding, springs from the urge, inherent in man, to find the secret of the universe, to grasp it not in parts but in its wholeness.[116]

Otto calls these two types as the "emotional and erotic mysticism" and the "intellectual mysticism". He further divides the second type into the "mysticism of introspection" and the "mysticism of unifying vision" connecting these two respectively with the 'Inward path' and the 'outward Path'.[117]

With regard to the first type which has been so common in the medieval Indian theology and named 'Bhakti mysticism' (the Christian name for which is'Voluntaristic Mysticism'), Otto observes: "It is peculiar to this 'Bhakti mysticism', as to our ''voluntaristic mysticism' that it seeks

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115. Happold, Mysticism, p.40.

116. Ibid. pp.40-41.

117. Otto. Mysticism East and West, pp.30 f. and 39-42.

to attain unity with the Highest through coalescence by an emotional exaggeration and glow of feeling. And even the Highest is thought of as responding to amorous longings."[118]

Of the second type the greatest exponents, according to Otto, have been Eckhart in the West and Shankara in the East, both of whom are seekers after jnana, vidya, samyagdarshnam, i.e. knowledge.[119]

The third well-known type is the Nature mysticism, which is akin to the 'Outward Path' of Otto, as mentioned above. The idea behind this type is the conception of unity in diversity, the 'ekam' of the Rigveda (i.e. the One). It is a unifying vision; its watchword is unity, not inward soul. Nature mysticism is what William James calls 'Expansion'[120] the 'sarvam' of the Indian mystic theology.

Nature mysticism, says Otto, is the sense of being immersed in the oneness of nature, so that man feels all the individuality, all the peculiarity of natural things in himself. He dances with the motes of dust and radiates with the sun, he rises with the dawn. It is romantic and presupposes a highly developed sensitiveness for nature; it is a sublimated naturalism, even in its highest and most abstract forms and therefore, easily passes into the fervour of erotic mysticism.[121]

Thus the emotional-cum-erotic mysticism and the Nature mysticism easily merge into each other and these two types

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118. Ibid., p.30.
119. Loc. cit.
120. Ibid. p.75.
121. Loc.cit.

are often found together and as a common factor among mystics of this 'first' type (i.e. emotional as distinguished from the 'second' i.e. intellectual.)

The Christian term in vogue in the ancient and the early medieval ages, and commonly used by Eckhart, for the intellectual type of mysticism, was 'Contemplation' and it was Luther who, like the Indian saint Ramanuj, led a revolt against this type of cold and abstract spiritual intellectualism, giving his clear preference to the emotional and ethical approach to God and the world.

Otto has coined another term for the vital mystical philosophy of Eckhart as constrasted with the cold and static Vedantic philosophy of Shankara and called it the 'dynamic mysticism', though it may not be regarded as a new and separate type.[122] It is, in fact, an off-shoot of the 'mysticism of introspection', though it seems to possess a tendencious affinity with the outward and extrovertive aspects of the emotional or the Nature mysticism. This dynamic element is what Otto calls the mystical principle in the Godhead viz. "He is a stream of glowing vitality."[123] This principle of vitality, inherent in God and in life as a whole, was later developed by Bergson in his well-known philosophy of 'Vitalism' or the '*elan vital*.[124] What Otto

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122. Ibid., p.169.

123. *Loc.cit.*

124. For Bergson's mystic philosophy, see discussion in Russell, *Mysticism and logic* pp. 14-16 Cf. *Dictionary of Philosophy*, ed. B.D.Runes, 15th ed.(1960),p.89 for the meaning of the term *elan vital*.

means by the enunciation of this 'dynamic mysticism' is perhaps the emphasis he discovers in Eckhart on the ethical and active way of approach to things as against the passive and escapist (the well-known verdict in favour or Martha, rather than Mary);[125] in other words, the emphasis on the 'kinetic'(active) faculty of the mind, as compared with the affective and the cognitive.

Jaures said: "God is not a total but an active infinite, beyond the scope of mathematics."[126]

So far we have noticed that there are two main types of mysticism, the emotional and the intellectual i.e. the outward and the inward, though there have been cited two other 'types' which are only offshoots, i.e. the Nature mysticism and the dynamic mysticism. Stace has given two very cogent and appropriate epithets for both these main types viz. the Extrovertive mysticism and the Introvertive mysticism.[127] He has based his view on the study of the two representative types of mystical experience as grounded in the psychological phenomena of extroversion and introversion of the mind or the personality. Thus his classification and nomenclature closely correspond to the psychological study of mystical experiences presented by William James in his famous work.[128]

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125. Otto remarks that Eckhart favours Martha, the activist, as against Mary the quietist op.cit., p.176.

126. Quoted in Marquette Introduction to Comparative Mysticism. p. 197.

127. Mysticism and Philosophy, pp. 60-61 and 131.

128. Varieties of Religions Experience, (Chap. 'Mysticism') pp. 299-337.

Approached from a different angle, says Happold, it is possible to consider mysticism in its three aspects of nature - Mysticism, soul-mysticism and God-mysticism. As regards nature mysticism, he says that "It is characterized by a sense of the immanence of God or soul in Nature. At the heart of it in its most highly developed form lies what Zaehner, in Mysticism, Sacred and Profane, calls the 'pan-en-henic' experience that is, experience of the All in the One and of the One in the All, which is typical of much mystical insight. It may usually be labelled 'pantheistic'.[129]

The Soul-mysticism is peculiarly Indian in concept and exposition. Westerns cannot easily understand it, as Happold remarks.[130] Some schools of Hindu and Buddhist mysticism have confined their sphere of experience to the soul itself and the quest of the inner self is their main object or goal, irrespective of the idea of the existence or non-existence of God.

The basis of God-mysticism, on the other hand, is the idea of the 'return of the spirit to its immortal and infinite Ground, which is God."[131] There are two variants of the mystical approach to God (in God-mysticism) viz., the complete absorption or identification with Divinity and, second, the retaining of identity and personality, by a process of 'union'

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129. Mysticism, pp. 43-45.

130. Ibid., p.44.

131. Loc.Cit.

and 'transformation'.[132]

In the end, it may be remarked that mysticism has no exclusive or 'watertight' classification of types in as much as it is in its very essence and nature synthetic and unitive but since the Godhead assumes principles of 'duality' within the domain of unity, which creates 'paradoxicality'[133] (or antithesis) and the concept of 'otherness' within the oneness of God, the approach and reference to the Divine Being (who is at once Absolute and Immanent, Transcendent and involved) takes different shapes and forms and thus causes the division into 'types' of mysticism and mystical experience. Ultimately speaking, these types intermerge and intermingle with each other and give the final impression of the unitary realization.

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132. Ibid., p.45. The first is mostly characteristic of the Eastern as the second of the Western mysticism. In Sufi terminology both these variants have been called 'fana' and 'baqa'. Cf. R.A.Nicholson, Mysticism of Islam, pp.18, 28 and 61.

133. Happold, Loc.Cit.

CHAPTER II

MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE

The Mystic

It is experience that matters most in mysticism. Experience and no philosophyzing. In fact, there is no possible substitute for it. And for the incidence or occurrence of experience, a human, living agent is needed. This human agent is what we call a mystic.

The mystic's experience is no ordinary experience of life or reality as it holds good to every human being in his down-to-earth existence. His experience is something 'Vital' or 'Sanguine', in which he is fully involved, or we can say, wholly identified. To use a phrase, he becomes 'all-experience', the experient and the experience unified in one subtle process.

The mystic is a 'chosen' person, one who is divinely appointed or designated for a definite role or purpose, which comes to him in a natural course and in due time. He is thus 'conditioned' from the very core of his being and from his pre-natal existence.

Though apparently a mystic will appear and <u>is</u> an ordinary human being, yet as a mystic (and when or since he is a mystic) he is a person fully metamorphozed i.e. completely changed.[1] By an act of faith or, in the words of Younghusband by a "fearful venture of faith" he gets a new life, a higher life, as in the case of a caterpillar which by

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1. Cf. T.Younghusband, <u>Modern Mystics</u>, p.15 (Introduction).

secret evolution <u>becomes</u> a butterfly.[2]

The mystic experience makes the experient mystic a category apart from all other humans, because what he experiences is something only 'given to him' and all others not only do not have it, but also cannot know it. Thus, the mystic in his fortuitous joy, has an experience which "alters his whole attitude to life."[3]

The exceptionality makes the true mystic utmost daring and fearless. He will affirm and declare the truth as experienced by him, even in the face of sure death. Annie Besant observes: "Only the true Mystic can walk unblenching through the fire of rebuke, and 'even in hell can whisper', 'I have known.'"[4]

Just as mysticism is diametrically opposed to all dogmatism, the mystic is the person diametrically opposed to the dogmatist or the mere theologist. Whereas the former is extremely humble, the latter is utterly vain. Ultimately, however, the mystic wins because he, in his experience of reality, which is at once "direct and immediate",[5] has access

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2. <u>Loc.cit</u>. Cf. also the opening lines in Guru Nanak's Var Asa: "Countless times a day, hail, unto the Guru all hail whose transmuting spirit has changed mortals into God-like saints." <u>AG</u>.,462 f. (<u>SSWS</u>,p.91).(<u>Balhari Gur apne deohari sad var. Jin manas te devate kiai karat na lagi var</u>).

3. Younghusband, <u>op.cit.</u>, p.9.

4. Annie Besant, <u>Mysticism</u>, p.5. <u>Cf</u>. also Siriskumar Ghose, <u>Mystics and Society</u>, p.2 f.

5. Younghusband, <u>op.cit</u>. p.19.

to the rarified realm of content and meaning (in the words of Maulana Rum, the 'kernal' as opposed to the 'outer shell' or the 'husk'[6] while the so called religious heads and the common rut of people keep engrossed in the externalities and formalities of religion.

"The Mystic cares not, " says Annie Besant, "to argue about the dead-letter meaning of any dogma; he sees the heart of it by the light of his own experience and to him its true value lies in its inner content, not its outer history."[7]

The mystic, thus, has a natural precedence over mysticism, as the sun has over the sunshine. The one is the cause, the other the effect, the one is the subject, the other the predicate. In other words, all mysticism emanates from the mystic or is the result of mystical experience. Hence the imperative need to study the mystic and his experience at close quarters.

All the most precious elements of life and the universe seem to combine and coincide in the making of a mystic, or to be more exact, in the proliferation of the mystic's experience. Younghusbands avers that an 'urge from within and the pressure from without meet and correspond" to bring mystic state in play. He is naturally 'enthralled' by it and 'in that moment he is entering on a new state of being. Before that he had led a pre-natal existence."[8]

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6. Masnavi Maulana Rum. "I extracted the marrow out of the Quran. And threw away the bones to the dogs." Cf. Gulwant Singh, art. "Guru Nanak and Sufism" (Panjabi), Three Research Papers on Guru Nanak (Panjabi), p.64.
7. Op.cit., p.7.
8. Op.cit., p.21.

"True mysticism is an experience and a life","says Spurgeon.[9] 'Life' here implies a living mystic and 'experience', a mystical one. This gives inherent authority and irrefragable relevance to the mystic. He is so much above objective reference that we have only to believe him, not to argue with him. "The mystic", says Stace, "indeed does not argue. He has his own subjective certainty."[10]

A mystic is no idle babbler. He speaks with real meaning infused in his speech. He has the authority of experience behind him. He says what he sees or apprehends or what in truth he feels to be said, as if he was being dictated from some hidden source. Guru Nanak says "Just as the Lord's word comes to me, the same I reveal, O Lalo."[11]

A true mystic is certainly a 'transformed' being, a newly fashioned ego or, perhaps, an alter ego. Mukerjee says: "Mysticism exalts the common life of man to a dignity equalling that of Gods."[12]

Inge quotes Windleband to say that the only true mystic is one who sees realities and knows how to distinguish them from phantasies."[13] Ghalib, the Sufi poet, says:

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9. Spurgeon, Mysticism in English Literature, p.11. Cf. Harbhajan Singh, Study and Teaching (Panjabi), Chap."Rahasvad" (Mysticism) p.42.
10. Mysticism and Philosophy, Preface.
11. Guru Nanak, AG,p.722 Cf. SSWS,p.96 (Jaisi Mai avai Khasam ki bani taisra kari gian ve Lalo).
12. Theory and Art of Mysticism, p.300.
13. Inge, Mysticism in Religion, p.142. Cf. Aldous Huxley: "The mystics are a channel through which a little knowledge of reality filters down to our human universe of ignorance and illusion." Quoted in Siriskumar Ghose, Mystics and Society, p. 16.

"The pluralization of Oneness is the worship of phantasy;
It is these mental idols which have made me an infidel." 14

The mystic goes straight to the heart of things. He shuns all props, all veils, all abstractions, all signs, all coteries that come between him and the Reality. He has firm belief in this wisdom that only like can meet the like. Perphyry says: "Like is known by the like and the condition of all knowledge is that the subject should become like the object."[15]

All spiritual knowledge is a 'becoming', a shaping, a transformation. As Spurgeon says: "We must be in love if we are to know what love is; we must be musicians if we are to know what music is; we must be god-like if we are to know what God is."[16]

So the mystic has to brace up his whole self so that it may be acceptable for a higher shaping. John Smith, the Cambridge Platonist, said: "Such as men themselves are such will God Himself seem to them to be."[17] Knowledge of God is limited by our capacity to receive Him, remarks Spurgeon.[18]

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14. Kasrat-araiy-i-wahdat hai prastari-i-wahm,
Kar diya kafir in isnam-i-khayali ne mujhe. (Diwan-i-Urdu)

15. Quoted in Spurgeon, of.cit p.4 For the mystic even God becomes mystical as Otto observes: "Mysticism appears where God is seen in a deeper sense as a Mystical Being (e.g.as Deity without modes." Mysticism East and West. p.142.

16. Spurgeon, Loc.cit.

17. Ibid., p.5.

18. Loc.cit.

The spirit infusing all beings and things is in its true nature divested of all attributes and devoid of all attachment with material objects and thus remains always in its true, pristine 'purity' or 'absoluteness'. The mystic has therefore, to become spirit or spiritlike, if he has to know it or to meet it. In the famous words of Plotinus, this mystic elevation is "the flight of the Alone to the Alone."[19]

A mystic is intensely and supremely happy, mysticism being the very centre of his being ... " a flame which feeds his whole life."[20]

Mystic's unity with the Divine Being involves a complete identification: no half-measures, no compromise. God and his lover or seeker are one, who can distinguish between them? Eckhart says: "Simple people conceive that we are to see God, as if He stood on that side and we on this side. It is not so: God and I are one in the act of perceiving Him."[21]

This highest Divine-human experience, on mystical level, has been beautifully alluded to by Annie Besant:

> "The primary experience of mysticism is direct communion with the unseen, the recognition of the God without by the God within, the touching of invisible realities, the passing with open eyes into the world beyond the veil. It substitutes experience for authority, knowledge for faith and it finds its guarantee in the 'common-sense' of all mystics, the identity of the experiences of all who traverse the grounds untrodden by the profane." 22

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19. Ibid., p.11.
20. Ibid, ,P.5.
21. Ibid., p.6.
22. Mysticism, p.6.

Mystic Beliefs

It is actual experience that characterises a mystic, above everthing else -- experience which brings deep convictions and beliefs such as: (i) the basic unity of all that exists; (ii) all things are manifestations of one divine life; (iii) spirit is immortal and phenomena is changing; (iv) the Ideal is the only Real and; (v) spirit is distinct from intellect and reason.[23]

The belief in the unknown and unseen Reality is for the mystic the first prerequisite -- a belief which leads to the higher conviction called 'faith'. A mystic must believe before he can know. In Theologia Germanica, it is said: %"He who would know before he believeth, cometh never to true knowledge."[24]

Thus belief and faith must precede mystical knowledge, because they prove to be the necessary test for judging the bonafides of the mystic. The mystic, we can safely say, is one who first believes, with an inner certitude and then, led on by the all-knowing Reality to the unknown spheres of knowledge, comes to the state of actual experience of the 'vision' and 'ecstasy'. Ecstasy, in a way, is the highest belief and the surest faith.

Belief is another name for self-surrender. Russell says: "What is, in all cases, ethically characteristic of mysticism is absence of indignation or protest, acceptance

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23. Spurgeon, op.cit. p.3.

24. Ibid. p.8.

with joy, disbelief in the ultimate truth of the division into two hostile camps, the good and the bad. This attitude is a direct outcome of the nature of the mystical experience: with its sense of unity is associated a feeling of infinite peace."[25]

This is how the mystic crosses the limits of plurality and duality and enters into the state of ecstasy, the blissful domain of divine unity where the good and the bad lose all meaning and the mystic knows and perceives only oneness and perfect 'beatitude'. But, do whatever he may, the mystic can never cross the limits of duality unless he has the fullest belief and the deepest faith in the transcendental and unitary Reality.

Mysticism, says Dasgupta, refers to the belief that God is realized through ecstatic communion with God.[26]

According to Russell the whole edifice of mysticism rests on four beliefs viz.

1. Belief in 'insight' as against discursive, analytic knowledge.
2. Belief in unity and refusal to admit 'opposition or division', anywhere.
3. Belief in the denial of the reality of time.
4. Belief in regarding evil as a mere appearance.[27]

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25. Mysticism and Logic, p.11 Cf. Hujwiri (Kashf'ul Mahjub): 'The first step in the path of unity is the oblivion of multiplicity". Quoted in Marquette, Introduction to comparative Mysticism, p.166.

26. Hindu Mysticism, Preface.

27. Mysticism and Logic, pp.8-10.

It may be pointed out that these mystic beliefs are not only preceded but also followed by the actual mystical experience which fact provides whatever strength or relevance they have in the field of mysticism.

Mystic Experience as Love.

The best mystic expression of belief and faith is the divine love. According to Mansur alhallaj, the essence of God's essence is love. Before the creation God loved Himself in absolute unity and through love revealed Himself to Himself alone.[28]

Dasgupta alludes to the universality of love, when he says: "The basis of all religions is the love of God."[29]

Plotinus, the greatest mystic-philosopher in the West, declared that whosoever beholds beauty in any form, takes a step on the way leading to contemplation of the One. The value of beauty comes from its power to awaken love which is the main agent of man's ascension.[30]

Love is not just an emotion or a longing; it is, in its true meaning, surrender of the whole self to the will of the Divine Beloved. Christ said: "If a man loves me, he will observe my commandments: and my Father will Love him, and we shall come in him and establish our abode in him."[31]

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28. Nicholson, Studies in Islamic Mysticism, p. 80. Cf. Mystics of Islam, pp. 116, 160.

29. Hindu Mysticism, p. 130.

30. Quoted in Marquette, op. cit. p. 125.

31. Gospel of St. John, 14. 23. (New Testament).

The secret source of love is to be found in the Eternal and the Infinite, as Kierkegaard remarks.[32] This love process is however, double i.e. "Christian love of God and Love of thy neighbour."[33] It is spiritual as well as ethical.

For some mystics love is 'eros' or exaggerated emotion which Kant calls 'Pathological',[34] with orgies and paroxymys, and for others, as in Eckhart, it is the Christian virtue named agape which is strung as death but no excess, which is inward but of deep humility, at once active in willing and doing as Kant's 'practical' love.[35]

Russell observes: "Possibility of universal love and joy lends supreme value to the mystic emotion, apart from the creeds built upon it."[36]

Love comes to our rescue in the perception of eternal life, says Dean Inge,[37] adding that "love guarantees personality, for it needs what has been called 'otherness'. In all love there must be a subject and object and a bond between them which transcends without annulling their separateness."[38]

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32. Quoted in Mukerjee, op.cit.,p.128.
33. Otto, op.cit., p.212.
34. Cf. Indian mystic poet Ghalib: "What they call love is but a perversity of the brain." ("Kahte hain jisko ishq khalal hai dimagh ka.") Diwan.-i-Urdu.
35. Otto, Loc.cit.
36. Mysticism and Logic, p.28.
37. Outspoken Essays, p.278.
38. Loc.cit.

The mystic's love represents his whole spiritual and ethical attitude: on spiritual level, it is ecstasy, vision, raptus, trance and on ethical level it is campassion,[39] charity, humility, 'poverty'[40] -- virtues which ensure the mystic's 'reaching out' to the Eternal, Attributeless God through His created sentient beings.

Love also has faith as its guide and mentor, for the mystic must reach a state of mind where only faith can help him, nothing else. Feredric Myers defines faith as "the resolution to stand or fall by the noblest hypothesis."[41] St.Clement of Alexandria divides the course representing faith into three sections, viz. purgation, or purification, enlightenment and unitive love.[42]

Grace and Effort:

Love and faith do not depend upon the mystic's own effort, but are given to him by the Supreme Beauty which not only ravishes and fascinates but also saves and preserves. This 'saving' element in Divinity is called 'Grace'?[43]

Marquette remarks while discussing 'Grace': The idea of Grace does not preclude the human aspiration to gain salvation as it is ingrained in every heart ... man must be

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39. Russell: "The thing I mean is love, Christian love or compassion". Impact of Science on Society, p.114.

40. The word as used by christian writers or as Guru Nanak uses it: Garibi i.e. self-abnegation. Cf. Sorath, AG, 595. "Make Name /God of/Thy seed, contentment thy leveller, and humility (gharibi) thy garment." (Nam bij santokh suhaga rakh garibi ves).

41. Quoted in Inge, Mysticism in Religion, p.162.

42. Loc.cit.

43. St. Augustine calls this 'beautiful gift' of Grace as 'Euchrism' Quoted in Marquette, op.cit. p.114.

lifted above individual limitations by a spark from the Infinite.[44]

Only whom God choses, attains Him, says Dasgupta.[45] The concept of Grace pre-supposes a benevolent Divinity which, out of love and compassion, takes voluntary initiative to 'save' or 'uplift' a lost, forlorn soul by creating the faculty or tendency of selfless love in the heart of their person. This is how Grace comes into play.

Sandreams discusses two theories about Grace i.e. the Grace that comes as a gift totally and second, Grace that comes with effort and discipline.[46]

It is, indeed, a moot question, how to determine the relative position between Grace and human effort viz. how far a man has to act and how far to expect Grace, ex grata; again, whether Grace is the result of effort or whether it is independent of effort?

Perhaps the best solution of this problem has been forcefully presented, as a very cogent philosophical argument, in Bhagavad Gita viz. that the human effort is vital and indispensable, but the result of all effort should be left to God, implying thereby that the effort thus made will be selfless and consecrated and will take the form of prayer and contemplation.

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44. Op.cit. p.35. Otto call it 'elective grace' (prasad). op.cit., p.108.

45. Hindu Mysticism, p.146.

46. Mystical State: Its Nature and Phases, quoted in Sircar, Mysticism in Bhagavat Gita, Preface.

Actually speaking, this matter is not philosophical or even metaphysical; it is basically a mystical question and the mystic in actual experience and contemplation will find a solution himself. Lord Krishna could not convince the warrior Arjuna by force of argument, but had to convince him by a superior logic i.e. mystical demonstration of cosmogenic phenomena where Reality is seen naked and pure, while it is covered and adulterated in the ordinary reality of the world.[47]

Dasgupta remarks: "The mysticism of the Gita consists in the belief that the performance of actions without personal attachment or self-seeking motive and with a dedication of their fruits to God, leads a man to his highest realization or liberation."[48]

Ecstasy or Samadhi

There are many words to express the highest state of mystical consciousness or experience, such as illumination, vision, rapture, raptus, trance, beatitude, statis, dhyan, Nirvan and 'turiya'.[49] St.Teresa calls them 'the same thing'.[50]

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47. For a revealing discussion of this question, see Sircar, op.cit. pp., 72-74.

48. op. cit., p.118.

49. Turya is the fourth state of consciousness in Hindu mysticism, the first three being, in order, Jagrat, Sapan, Sukhopti. W.James describes this state as "Super-Lucent, super-splendent, super-essential, super-sublime, super-everything." Varieties of Religious Experience. p.327, Cf. also Marquette, op.cit.,p.42.

50. D.Lewis, Life of St.Terssa (trans.), quoted in Stace, Mysticism and Philosophy, p.51. Sufis call this state 'wajd', 'fana','sama','hal',etc. Cf. R.A.Nicholson, Mystics of Islam, p.59, The special word for ecstasy in Buddhism is 'dhyana', W.James, op.cit., p.315.

This highest mystic experience known as 'vision' or 'ecstasy' is a state in which the mystic sees Reality face to face. He comes to possess a "definite faculty of vision", which has been variously called, "transcendental feeling", 'imagination', 'mystic reason', 'cosmic consciousness','divine sagacity'.[51] Wordsworth knew it at first hand when he said in Tintern Abbey:

> That serene and blessed mood
> In which ... the breath of this corporeal frame,
> And even the motion of our human blood,
> Almost suspended, we are laid asleep,
> In body and become a living soul;
> While with an eye made quiet by the power
> Of harmony and the deep power of joy,
> We see into the life of things.

Joy and harmony are the two most often-used words for ecstatic bliss experienced by the mystic.

Mukerjee observes: "The higher forms of mysticism are reached by translogical contemplation and experience of statis (samadhi)."[52]

Plotinus describes this state in his beautiful words: "Ecstasy is the bliss experienced upon union of the soul with its Divine source in achieved fulfilment and unbounded felicity."[53]

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51. Supergeon, op.cit., p.7.

52. Op.cit., Preface.

53. Quoted in Marquette, op.cit., p.122.

Different words have been used by the great mystics to denote the mystical state experienced in ecstasy e.g. Alim-i-Hahut (the highest world of the Sufis), Sunyata (Buddhistic term, meaning the Void), the Void (Eckhart uses it very often) the Yonder (as used by Plotinus) the 'Sacch Khand' (i.e. Region of Truth, used by Guru Nanak) the 'dhyana' or 'darshnam' (used by Sankara), the 'inituitus' (used by Eckhart), Deep Silence or Darkness (used by Christian mystics).[54]

Most mystics feel God to be absolutely transcendent to the universe of sensory experience.[55] Hence it is that mystical experience is regarded as something very rare and extraordinary.

Inge says: "That ecstasy is a real experience, cannot be doubted. It comes in a sudden flash; so Plato describes it in his Seventh Epistle and so Augustine describes it in almost the same words. While it lasts all the facuoties of the mind are suspended; the subject does not know whether he is in the body or out of the body ... He cannot describe it and it never lasts long. There is a curious consensus that about half an hour is what may be expected."[56]

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54. For these terms, see, passim, Marquette, op.cit., Inge, Mysticism in Religion, Stace, Mysticism and Philosophy, Otto. Mysticism East and West, For Guru Nanak (Sacch Khand) see Dewan Singh, Guru Nanak's Message in Jap Ji, p.102 and Mcleod Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion, pp.224-26.

55. Marquette, op.cit., p.199.

56. Mysticism in Religion, p.157, St. Teresa says: "This utter transformation of the soul continues only for an instant." Quoted in Stace, op.cit., p.50.

H.H.Brinton (author of the Mystic Will) quotes Boehme as saying: "In the light my spirit saw through all things and I recognized God in Grass and Plants."[57]

Plotinus (Enn.VI) says: "often when I awake from the slumber of the body and come to myself and step out of the outward world in order to turn in upon myself, I behold a wonderful beauty. Then I believe unshakably that I belong to a better world; most glorious light works strongly in me and I am become one of the Godhead."[58]

It would be pertinent here to distinguish between the genuine or real ecstasy and the lower mystical experience of 'visions and voices' which are mostly hallucinations, as those of St. Teresa.[59] Stace advances the reason for this that the most typical as well as the most important type of mystical experience is non-sensuous, whereas visions and voices have the character of sensuous imagery.[60]

John of the Cross says in the Dark Night of the Soul: "For, as God is not comprised in any image or form, nor contained in any particular kind of knowledge, the soul in order to be united with God must not take hold of any distinct form or any particularized knowledge."[61]

The Kath Upanishad describes the mystical experience as being 'soundless, formless, intangible.'[62] The

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57. Quoted in Stace, op.cit., p.69.
58. Quoted in Marquette, op.cit., p.122.
59. Stace, op.cit., p.49.
60. Loc.cit.
61. Ibid., p.50.
62. Upanished, trans. Prabhavananda and Feredrick Manchester, p.20. quoted in Stace, op.cit., p.50.

Svetasvatara Upanishad has it: "As you practice meditation you may see in vision forms resembling snow, crystal, wind, smoke, fire, lightning, fireflies, the sun, the moon. These are signs that you are on the way to the revelation of Brahman."[63]

These two types of mystical experience are inseparably connected with the two well-known types of mysticism viz. Introvertive and Extrovertive of which we shall have more discussion in the following pages.

The 'Turya' or the Fourth state, alike of the Indian Yoga philosophy and the Hindu and Sikh mysticism, has been described in Mandukya upanishad in the following words: 'Turya or Fourth ... is not the knowledge of the senses, nor is it relative knowledge nor yet inferential knowledge. Beyond the senses, beyond the understanding, beyond all expression is the Fourth. It is pure, unitary consciousness, wherein awareness of the world and the multiplicity is completely obliterated. It is ineffable peace. It is the supreme Good. It is one without a second. It is the Self."[64]

Similarly, in Plotinus we find the same description of the highest ecstasy which is above visions and voices: "The man is merged with the supreme, one with it. Only in separation is there duality ... Beholder was one with the

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63. Loc.cit. Cf. also Mukerjee, who divides 'Samadhi' into two phases or stages, the 'nirvikalpa' (asamprajnata) and the 'savikalpa' i.e. the spiritual and the psychical. op.cit., p.229.

64. Stace, op.cit., p.88.

Behold ... he is become the unity ... "[65]

This is the highest fruit of contemplation, this all-absorbing ecstasy, this engulfing illumination. The great Sufi[66] philosopher Al-Ghazali says: "When the mystic enters the pure and absolute unicity of the One and Alone, mortals reach the end of their ascent."[67]

It will not be out of place here to give two excerpts from the auto-biography of Al-Chazali translated, in part, by M. Schmolders, viz. (i) "The science of the Sufis aims at detaching the heart from all that is not God and at giving to it for sole occupation the meditation of the divine being" and (ii) "The first condition for a Sufi is to purge his heart of all that is not God."[68]

THE MYSTIC PARADOX

Though the mystic in his highest ecstasy transcends

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65. Ibid., p.104. Cf. Ghalib, Diwan: "The essence of beholding, beholder and the beheld is, one; I wonder then, in what account is this 'display'? "The actual verse:

Asle shahud-o-shahid-o-mashhud ek hai
Hairan hun phir mushahida hai kis hisab men.

66. A Sufi is a mystic, pure and simple, with the special mark of Islamic allegiance attached to him. Similarly the epithets Yogi or Vedantin are also near synonyms of the word' mystic'. Cf. Mohammad Sadiq. A History of Urdu Literature p.9, quoted in . Piar Singh, A critical Survey of Panjabi prose in the 17th century (unpublished thesis accepted for Ph.D.) p.30. Sadiq writes: "A Sufi is a saint ever in meditation and prayer so that he becomes 'dead to himself and alive to God."

67. Stace, op.cit.,p.105. Sufis call it 'fana ul-fana' and 'baqa', R.A.Nicholson., Mystics of Islam, pp.60-61.

68. Quoted in William James, op.cit., pp.316 f.

all duality or 'otherness', yet the great paradox inherent in all mysticism remains very much posited and established and beyond denial. This paradox between God and 'not God', 'the One' and 'the Many' (Eckhart unites it into one term 'the One-Many'), has been noted by William James.[69]

There is no doubt about it that "In God there is no duality. In the Presence, 'I' and 'WE' and 'You' do not exist..." as the Sufi writer Mahmud Shabistary says.[70] Yet there is clear and evident duality in the world of appearance. This fact creates the unresolvable paradox. In his experience the mystic realizes unity and also sees the one Reality in all the diverse forms of existence (this is what we call 'pantheism'), but the non-mystic 'externalist' or 'naturalist', neither realizes unity nor perceives its immanence in the world of 'colour and form' or 'the name and form'.[71]

We can name these two paradoxical phases of mystical experience (though they are actually the personal and the impersonal states of Godhead, called the Logos or Ishvara and the Absolute or the Brahman, as proponded in Plotinus' well-known theory of Emanation and in the Qualified Monism (Vishisht advaita) of Ramanuja and his followers in the Hindu mystic

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69. Ibid., p.327 Cf. also Stace, op.cit., p.212.

70. Margaret Smith, Readings from the Mystics of Islam. quoted in Stace, op.cit. p.105.

71. The former phrase is according to Sufi thought while the latter is a 'vedantic' term. Mukerjee says: "Mysticism always raises the problem of the conflict between the feeling of immanence and the idea of transcendence." op.cit., p.176.

thought),[72] as the cosmic consciousness and the purely Divine consciousness.

This dual concept of the Godhead[73] as simultaneously Transcendent or Absolute and Immanant or Pantheistic (based as it is on the two planes of Divine existence, the Absolute and the Contingent)[74] is the main reason for the inevitable usage of what we call 'symbolism' in mystical literature. In a way all mystical experiences are symbolical, whether they be related to Cosmic consciousness which is directly symbolical or to the Absolute consciousness (i.e. Contemplation or Identity to use technical words), which is indirectly symbolical.[75]

CHARACTERISTICS OF MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE:

Mystic experience, being of psychic nature, is what we regard as actual or first-hand experience. No hearsay or second-hand knowledge counts in mysticism. Mystics, being utmost sincere in their profession and aspiration, speak what they actually know or feel about the Reality and the world. They indeed correlate the inconsistant and irreconcilable polarities

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72. Cf. Marquette, op.cit., p.119 (for Plotinus) and Dasgupta, op.cit.,pp. 121-24 (for Ramanuja.).

73. Cf. the difference between Godhead and God, Otto, op.cit. p.7 f. Cf. also Al-Jili's concept of Godhead as discussed in Iqbal, Development of Metaphysics in Persia, pp.170 f.

74. F. Schuon, Understanding Islam, trans. D.M. Matheson, p.156.

75. Indirectly, in the sense that the ineffable ecstasy is attempted to be conveyed or described in terms of human language and as we know, all language is symbolical. For discussion of mystical symbolism, Cf. Inge. Mysticism in Religion, pp.27, 73-75, 84-85. Also Mukerjee, op.cit. pp.89-91.

of Reality. It is their greatest use or power.

This empirical quality of the mystic who lives in the moment and also in the eternity in the same breath (he is thus midway between empiricism and idealism) has been evidenced by Marquette when he says: "Mystics are the only thorough-going empiricists in the history of philosophy."[76]

Before we may discuss the characteristics, it will be useful to settle a preliminary question whether the mystical experience caused by spiritual enlightenment and the experience induced by the intoxicants or the psychic means, are the same in nature and quality, or are of different genre from each other?

William James says that not only "they belong to one and the same genus" but are "one of the same species."[77] He further observes: "Looking back on my own experiences, they all converge towards a kind of insight to which I cannot help ascribing some metaphysical significance."[78] He refers especially to the efficacy of alcohol, nitrous oxide and ether. About alcohol he writes: "The sway of alcohol over mankind is unquestionably due to its power to stimulate the mystical faculties of human nature usually crushed to earth by the cold facts and dry criticism of the sober hour."[79] About the other two stimulants he observes: "Nitrous oxide and either (sic) (i.e. ether), especially nitrous oxide, when

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76. Op.cit., p.196.
77. Op.cit., p.306
78. Loc.cit.
79. Ibid., p.304.

sufficiently diluted with air, stimulate the mystical consciousness in an extraordinary degree. Depth beyond depth of truth seems revealed to the inhaler."[80]

Marquette also holds the same view: "We would assert that there can be no essential difference between ecstasies produced by narcotics or by hynotic suggestion or again by what is known as religious ideas. Otherwise it would be necessary that human nature should vary in its very core."[81] The Hindu Yogis and ascetics (Sadhus) and the Sufi, fakirs or dervishes are also known to have taken advantage of such artificial aids for easy entrance into trances and ecstasies,[82] but Kabir[83] and Guru Nanak[84] the great mystics of the Bhakti cult, have rejected such degenerating and enervating methods.

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80. Ibid., p.305 Dean Inge also discusses the use of drugs (called by him 'auto-intoxication) such as hashish, alochol, mescal as means to induce mystical state, connecting these 'pathological' and physiological aberration with the psychic varieties of auto-suggestion 'schizophrenia' (Split personality) caused by Oedipus complex, psychasthenia, collective excitement and frenzy brought about by orgiastic dances (as in Suri dervishes) -- all these means, concludes Inge, are spurious and of non-mystical character. Mysticism in Religion, p.28.

81. Op.cit., p.186. For the study of the effect of 'mescalin' (a drug of the type of the more recent drugs 'Hashish 'Marijuana and 'LSD') as an aid to mystical inducement, Cf. Passim A. Huxley, The Doors of Perception.

82. Cf. J.C.Oman, The Mystics, Ascetics and Saints of India. pp. 179 f.

83. Cf. Slok Bhagat Kabirji Stik. ed. Sahib Singh (Slok, 233) pp.251 f. "All those persons who take hashish (bhang), fish and wine, they lose all religious benefit derived from pilgrimage and fasting."

84. Cf. Asa, AG. 360. "If there be a dealer in nector, how can he go in for the useless wine"? (Amrit ka vapari hovai kia mad chhuchhe bhao hari).

Now about the characteristics. Every mystical experience is something unique in itself[85] and at the same time universal in quality. W. James[86] has discovered and enunciated four characteristics which are common to all mystical experiences viz.

i) Ineffability:

All mystical experiences defy expression and as such have to be directly experienced. They cannot thus be imparted or transferred to others.

ii) Noetic quality:

Mystical states are not only akin to states of feeling, but also states of knowledge. "They are, says James, "States of insight into depths of truth unplumbed by the discursive intellect."[87]

iii) Transiency:

Mystical experiences are of very short duration, lasting about half an hour or an hour or so. In their very nature, they are not sustainable beyond moments or very short intervals of time. Intensity of feeling or insight, not time, is the important factor.

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85. William James says that "any object that is infinitely important to us and awakens our devotion feels to us also as if it must be suigeneris and unique." op.cit., p.26.

86. Op.cit., pp. 299-301.

87. Ibid., p.300.

iv) Passivity:

> The will of the experient gets suspended or in abeyance in the mystical state - a sort of suspended animation sets in inface of the higher consciousness that is released. Hence in certain cases the appearance or incidence of 'prophetic speech automatic writing or the mediumistic trance."[88]

Regarding these characteristics as one series, William James calls them "the mystical group". The simplest rudiment of mystical experience, says he, is the sudden awakening of a deepened sense in connection with some maxim or formula which had lost truth or meaning by force of habit or dullness of external usage.[89]

Happold[90] adds two more characteristics to those classified by William James viz.

v) Consciousness of oneness of everything, i.e. the unity, as All in one and one in All. This is the pantheistic conception so dominantly present in the Indian mysticism.[91]

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88. Loc.cit. About 'ineffability' Cf.Inge: 'But the vision is hard to describe. For how can one describe as other than oneself that which, when one saw it, seemed to be one with ourself." Mysticism in Religion, p.210.

89. Op.cit.,p.301 Happold calls it, "an awakening of the transcendential sense." Mysticism, p.52.

90. Op.cit., pp.46-47.

91. Cf. Oman, op.cit.,p.106 f. He has inter alia emphasized the negative aspect of pantheism, calling it "an abstract nebulous pantheism" and to support his views, quotes Caird, Evolution of Religion, Vol.1, 263, viz. "a gulf in which all difference was lost."

vi) The sense of timelessness. This going beyond time and space makes mystical state strictly transcendental in quality and nature. The phenomenal world loses its relevance in this supramundane state.

R.M.Bucke notes the following characteristics of mystical experience; (i) subject light or photism; (ii) moral elevation; (iii) intellectual illumination; (iv) sense of immortality; (v) loss of fear of death; (vi) loss of sense of sin; and (vii) suddenness.[92]

According to D.T.Suzuki who uses '<u>Satori</u>' as the Japanese word for enlightenment, the following characteristics are noteworthy: (i) irrationability, inexplicability, incommunicability; (ii) intuitive insight; (iii) authoritative-ness; (iv) affirmation (positive character); (v) sense of the beyond; (vi) impersonal tone; (vii) feeling of exaltation; and (viii) momentariness (equivalent to Bucke's Suddenness).[93]

Marquette, however, has divided mystical experience into two broad species viz. (i) those dealing with objective perceptions and (ii) those of purely subjective nature. "The first", he says "are constituted by the perceptions of metaphysical objects, angels, lights, Divine persons, effulgent and radiant glories and other undescribable entities ...

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92. <u>Cosmic Consciousness</u>, pp.72-73 and 79., quoted in Stace, <u>op.cit</u>.,p.44.

93. <u>Zen Buddhism</u>: <u>Selected Writings of D.T.Suzuki</u> ed. William Barrett, pp. 103-108, quoted in Stace, <u>Ibid</u>., p.44.

The others consist of the consciousness of the progressive attenuation of the limits and characterizing attributes of the soul until it finally empties itself, as it were, in the Infinite in self-obliterating passive ecstasy."[94]

The mystic has to choose the middle path between the two extreme polarities, horizontal and vertical, of the vast Cosmic world, thus striking a compromising note in the s seemingly heterogenous and actually harmonious unity which underlies all diversity. The well-known dictum of Eckhart viz. "Enter God, exit creatures" will seem to the more rational and balanced (?) modern mind to be at the most an emotional effusion of the rapturous soul while the work-a-day material world will have both God as well as creatures as its ultimate and immediate concerns. Commenting on this Eckhartian dictum (cited above) Rufus Jones says: "It nullifies the significance of the moral struggle. It turns evolution and historical progress into an empty dream. It lands us in the chaos of Maya and illusion. There is nothing stable for our feet to stand upon ... We change our rich, colourful world for a pure abstraction. Our human vocabulary loses all its meaning."[95] The greatest mystics in the world, the prophets and the seers as well as the mystical philosophers, have all accepted God and the created world as one unit or a unitive principle.[96]

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94. Op.cit., p.189.

95. Exponents of Mysticism, pp.106 et seq. /quoted in Marquette, op.cit., p.200.

96. e.g. Aristotle defined God as "The immobile motor of the Universe." Quoted in Marquette, Ibid., p.199.

To use an analogy, God may be regarded as the centre of the universe, while the material world lies on the fringe of the circumference.[97] But the mystic has to look to the centre and also to the fringe at the same time. This is the great mystical paradox. Thus, says Marquette, the attitude of the mystic towards earthly life is somewhat similar to that of the kindergarten teacher towards the games and plays of her little wards, which although childish, are part of the lofty purpose of the total education of divine souls.[98]

There is still another classification of the mystical experiences i.e. into introvertive and extrovertive; the former being of spontaneous quality and the latter, acquired ones. "The essential difference between them is that the extrovertive experience looks outward through the senses while the introvertive looks inward into the mind."[99] The introvertive state is the same as Otto's 'Introspection' or the 'inward way' and corresponds to Underhill's 'introversion'.[100]

The following common characteristics between the Extrovertive and Introvertive mystical states may be noted:[101]

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97. Cf. Marquette, Ibid., p.204. This analogy has been used by him in discussing Nietzsche's "reversal of all values." Inge also used this simile: "God's centre is every where, his circumference nowhere." Mysticism and Religion, p.82.

98. Ibid., p.202.

99. Stace, Mysticism and Philosophy, pp. 60-61.

100. Loc. cit.

101. Ibid., p.131.

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EXTROVERTIVE	INTROVERTIVE
1. The unifying visions - all things are one.	The unitary consciousness; The One, the Void; pure consciousness.
2. The more concrete apprehension of the One as an inner subjectivity of life, in all things.	Non-spatial, non-temporal.
3. Sense of objectivity or reality.	The same.
4. Blessedness, peace, etc.	The same.
5. Feeling of the holy, sacred or divine.	The same.
6. Paradoxicality.	The same.
7. Ineffability (alleged by mystics to be ineffable).	The same.

The mystical experience, to conclude, is in its most essential nature, a profound realization by the experient spirit, of the utmost nearness of the Divine Being or Divine Presence - a proximity bordering on the inaffable feeling of unity and Oneness of Godhead permeating all being and non-being, existence and non-existence.[102] Such mystical experience, being of the highest quality, may most profitably be found represented in the actual description recorded by a great Sufi mystic, Bayazid Al Bistami: "He gave me to drink from the fountain of grace in the cup of fellowship and transformed me into state beyond description and brought me near unto Him and so near did He bring me to him that I became nearer to Him than the spirit is to the body and I continued until I became even as

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102. Cf. Max. Nardau, Degeneration (pp.63 f.) quoted in Oman, Mystics, Ascetics and Saints of India, p.177. viz. "Finally in the last stage comes ecstasy which Ribot calls 'the acute form of the effort after unity of consciousness."

the souls of men had been in that state before existence was and God abode in solitude."[103]

Russell also affirms this most important fact about the mystical experience: "One of the most convincing aspects of the mystic illumination is the apparent revelation of the oneness of all things, giving rise to pantheism in religion and monism in philosophy."[104]

The final stage of mystical experience called ecstasy or Samadhi[105] has been exquistely described, especially in its psychological aspect, by Max Nardau: "In ecstasy the excited part of the brain works with such violence that it suppresses the functioning of all the rest of the brain. The ecstatic subject is completely insensible to external stimuli. There is no perception, no representation, no grouping of representations into concepts or of concepts into judgements and reasoning."[106]

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103. Marquette, op.cit., p.182.

104. Mysticism and Logic, pp.40 f.

105. Max. Muller (Indian Philosophy, p.141) defines samadhi as "meditative absorption." quoted in Oman, op.cit.p.176.

106. Degeneration pp. 63 f., quoted in Oman, Loc.cit.

CHAPTER III

INDIAN MYSTIC TRADITION AND GURU NANAK.

RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND.

India has been the cradle and birth-place of many great religious of the world. The founders of these religions were invariably men of faith and of mystic vision.

Sri Aurbindo says:

> Mystics ... had an enormous influence on ... early civilizations; there was indeed almost everywhere an age of the Mysteries in which men of a deeper knowledge and self knowledge established their practices, significant rites, symbols, secret lore within or on the border of the more primitive exterior religions. 1

The mystic tradition in India has, therefore, always been co-exitent with the origin and development of religious processes and operations. Mysticism and religion both seem to have, as their basis, the same spiritual impulse inherent in all human beings. "Mysticism", remarks E.Caird, "is religion in its most concentrated and exclusive form."[2]

What religion seeks to achieve i.e. the establishment of a direct bond and union between man and God,[3] is possible only in a developed and heightened mystical state. It is not possible by merely observing the external forms and rituals, rules and ceremonies, so prevalent in all religions.

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1. Hymns to the Mystic Fire, quoted in Sisirkumar Ghose, Mystics and Society, p.39.

2. Quoted in Inge, Mysticism in Religion, p.25.

3. "The oldest and most common definition of religion is that religion is the link between man and God." Leo Tolstoy, Essays and Letters, p.293.

Mysticism, as sometimes misunderstood, is no idle pursuit or a spiritual lethargy and stasis. It is actually the main motive force in religion. It has a great conative and operational value. Aldous Huxley so pertinently observes:

> "The philosphy of mysticism is a kind of transcendental operationalism. Perform certain operations, it teaches, and certain states of the mind-body may result. These states are experienced as being intrinsically valuable, and their fruits improved character, increased sensitivity and insight are often ethically desirable."4

The Indian religious apotheosis, it can be safely remarked, has not only been representative of the Indian continent but the whole Eastern hemisphere. As Radhakrishnan says,"In the matter of religion, India typifies the East. Geographically it is between the Semitic West and the Mongolian East."5

Max Muller, the celebrated orientalist taking cognizance of the rich Indian tradition of religion and mysticism, says:

> "If I were asked under what sky the human mind has most fully developed some of the choicest gifts, has most deeply pondered on the greatest problems of life and has found solutions of some of them which will deserve the attention even of those who have studied Plato and Kant — I should point to India." 6

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4. Quoted in Sisirkumar Ghosh, op.cit., Preface, viii, f.
5. East and West in Religion, p.46.
6. India, What can It Teach Us? 1899, p.6.

This great mystic tradition of India comprises not only the indigenous Vedic religion, now called Hinduism, but also Buddhism, Jainism, Yogaism and after the advent of Muslim rule, Islam and Sikhism.

All these great religions, as long as they were enlivened and energized by the corresponding mystical inspiration and impulse, proved efficacious social institutions, but the moment their spiritual vitality was bogged down in the morass of mere ritualism, dogma and cant, they lost all social and human value and were, in turn, replaced by a more dynamic and progressive religious movement.

So is the fate of all religions, considered in their historical perspective. Divested of mystical impulse, they die and infused with spiritual elan,[7] they live, Tolstoy very sagaciously observes:

> "In all human societies, at certain periods of their existence, a time has come when religion has first swerved from its original purpose, then diverging more and more, it has lost sight of that purpose and has finally petrified into fixed forms, so that its influence on men's lives has become ever less and less." 8

This is exactly the moment that warrants the appearance of a mystic saviour.[9] Guru Nanak, in his own turn and time, came upon the Indian scene at the right moment, when the current religions, chief among which were Hinduism (which

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7. The Well-known Bergsonian term, more commonly known as Elan Vital which means the vital force or impulse of life. Cf. Dictionary of Philosophy ed. Dagobert D. Runes, 15th ed. 1960, p.89. See also Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary, ed. 1971.
8. Op.cit., p.289.
9. Cf. Bhagavatgita's well-known and oft-quoted lines: "Whensoever righteousness languishes and unrighteousness is on the ascendent, I create myself. I am born age after age, for the protection of the good, for the destruction of the evildoers and the establishment of the law." Bhagavadgita, iv. quoted in IPH. vol. 1 p.545.

represented a whole body of many successive religious movements since the time of the Vedic Rishis) and Islam (the one Aryan religion and the other Semitic) had got totally petrified into mere form and ritual and, thus, the darkness of ignorance and superstition, selfishness and evil, prevailed every where. Guru Nanak himself sharply reacted to this utterly deplorable state of affairs and gave a lucent, though laconic, expression of the same in his poetry:[10]

"This age is like a drawn sword, the kings are butchers.
Goodness has taken wings and flown.
In the dark night of falsehood
I espy not the moon of Truth anywhere;
I grope after truth and am bewildered,
I see no path in the darkness.

Bhai Gurdas, the first authentic chronicler and exponent (in poetic form) of Guru Nanak's life and thought, also strongly exphasized the inevitable correspondence between the hopeless religious conditions of the time and the need and exigency of a prophetic revelation, in order to dispell darkness from the world scene by the proliferation of the divine principle of light in the form of the Guru.[11] He says:

"When Nanak, the true Guru, appeared in this world,
all the mist vanished and the world was filled
with light.

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10. SSWS, p.82.

11. The word Guru etymologically means 'the one who dispels darkness' Cf. V.S.Apte, Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary, p.665 and MK, 314. Cf.also Mohan Singh Oberoi, Sikh Mysticism p.47. "Guru is not a person but the certainty of one's being led from darkness unto light ... "

> With the rising of the sun, the stars disappeared and darkness was no more. 12

Again:

> "The world was so much filled with evil, that the (mythical) Ox, beset with anxiety, wept day and night.
>
> ... ...
>
> There was none to arrest this catastrophe except a Sadh (i.e. Perfect Man) and Sadh there was none in the World." 13

When religion as an institution fails to deliver the goods, it is only the personal religion of a mystic that can come to its rescue. Toynbee rightly observes that mysticism is "personal religion raised to the highest power."[14]

Verily, the mystic, by his inner spiritual and esoteric achievement, expemplifies the true religious impulse in his own life and then disseminates it to the world abroad. So did Guru Nanak. For many long years of his early life, he kept his own (inner) council and deeply pondered over the miseries of the suffering world (just as many centuries before him Lord Buddha had, in moments of deepest compassion, brooded over such basic problems) and also about his own providential role towards amelioration of all this unbearable and rank misery.

Guru Nanak undoubtedly inherited and imbibed the strong Indian mystic tradition -- a tradition which had been built up, nourished and sustained by a succession of such exalted mystics as the Vedic Rishis (who composed the Upanishads), Lord Krishna, Lord Buddha, Muhammed, Shankaracharya, Ramanuja,

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12. Var, 1.27.
13. Ibid., 1.22.
14. Quoted in Sisirkumar Ghose, op.cit.p.1. Cf. also Emerson, Essays, p.244. "The religions of the world are the ejaculations of a few imaginative men."

Gorakhnath, Namdev, Farid, Kabir and others.

But he was no inheritor in the usual ecletic or syncretic sense. He was a great mystic in his own right. He accepted no human Guru as his spiritual preceptor[15] and claimed to have received all inspiration and spiritual insight directly from the Divine Being.[16]

Though essentially a man of peace, Guru Nanak possessed and evinced in his mystic person tremendous revolutionary fire and reformative zeal. All mystics are basically rebels and recalcitrants.[17] They are a truly non-conformist lot. When they cannot reform, they seek to change. When they find the foundations of a religious edifice completely rotten and unserviceable, they opt for a replacement and the promulgation of a new Dispensation. This is what Guru Nanak did in his own inimitable way. There is no exact parallel to what he achieved.

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15. For discussion of this subject, see A.C.Banerjee, Guru Nanak and His Times, p.158. Cf. W.H.Mcleod, Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion, pp. 198 f.

16. Sabad or Revealed Word, according to Guru Nanak himself, is his Guru. Siddh Gosht, 43, AG, 942. Cf. also Guru Gobind Singh, Chaupai, 9: "The only One who is eternally-incarnated, is my Guru."

17. Cf. Radhakrishnan, op.cit., p.104 ff.: "The believers in God possess the faith that rebels." Again: "If a new and better order is to arise, the old order must be broken." "What we call anarchy, revolt, revolution, are the means by which progress is achieved." Cf. also Hegel: "Stepping over corpses is the way in which the objective spirit walks in order to reach fulfilment." Quoted in Radhakrishnan, Loc.Cit.

Guru Nanak, as a matter of fact, had much to reject and denounce and little to accept and assimilate from the time-old religions extant in his time viz. the various forms of Hinduism, Vedanta, Yoga, Vaishnavism, Shaivism, Jainism, Tantrism, etc. and also Islam, with its popular form called Sufism. His very first doctrinal declaration was: "There is no Hindu and no Mussalman", which was a polite way of saying:" There is no Hindu Religion and no Islamic religion." He had,thus, to create a new faith, a new Dispensation, a new religion. Time was quite ripe for such a mystical tour-de-force.

What was it, then, one may ask, that Guru Nanak inherited from the Indian mystic tradition? Nothing, if we believe and consider that he had direct communion with the Supreme Being and that Truth was intuitively revealed to him as a divine favour and grace which descends upon only a few 'chosen ones'. Actually speaking, the term 'mystic tradition' is a misnomer. Mysticism has no tradition, in the ordinary sense of the word. It has no geneology, says K.A.Nizami (Islam, art. 'Mysticism', p.50). There is no historical continuity in the sphere of mystic thought. It is always new and fresh whenever and wherever it appears. It is always sporadic and phenomenal. Hence it is that we can only correlate Guru Nanak's mysticism with the past similar realizations in a general and illustrative manner. He had achieved his mystic moment after ages and ages of darkness and evil had contaminated and ravaged the annals of time.

Like all mystics, his appearance on the Indian scene was a challenge and a consternating shock (as that of

lightning) to the slowly-gathered fuel-like[18] clouds of religious and temporal powers of the time. Like all mystics, he was an iconoclost, an image-breaker, a reverser of tradition, a restorer of the primal mystic truth. Mystic truth and religious tradition (whether it be religious, or social or cultural or doctrinal) are a contradiction in terms; they are poles apart. Tradition often corrupts and engenders evil, while Truth always purges and purifies.

Radhakrishnan, who is no advocate of mysticism, affirms this fundamental reality, in his lucid words:

> "The great religious teachers of the world preach something different from the tradition they inherit. The seers of the Upanisads, Gautama, the Buddha, Zoroaster, Socretes, Jesus, Muhammad, Nanak and Kabir had to undergo in their lives an inevitable break-away from the traditional views. Even as the seers of the Upanisads and the Buddha protested against Vedic ceremonialism, even as Jesus denounced Rabbinical orthodoxy, we have to protect the enduring substance of religion from the forms and institutions which suffer from the weaknesses of man and the corruptions of times." 19

So did Guru Nanak, in his own age, try to protest and 'protect' the 'enduring substance of religion' which is another phrase for the perennial philosophy,[20] called mysticism. He was not an isolated figure in his Herculean effort towards

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18. For this Carlylian metaphor, see infra Chap.iv.

19. Recovery of Faith, p.13.

20. The term used by Aldous Huxley as the title for his famous book conveying the meaning of an abiding truth which can only be mystical.

a wholesale religious-cum-social reform, but was a powerful compatriot and compeer of a larger reform movement called the medieval Bhakti Movement.

We may here suggest one remote example of the Reform -ation Movement of the 15th century Europe to match the Bhakti Movement in India of the same historical period, of which Guru Nanak's religious revival was most probably the culminating point.

Macauliffe has brought out this important analogy in the following memorable words:

> "During the very period that Luther and Calvin in Europe were warning men of the errors that had crept into Christianity, several Indian saints were denouncing priestcraft, hypocrisy, and idolatory, and with very considerable success. Several of those great men who led the crusade against superstition, founded sects which still survive; but the most numerous and powerful of all is the great Sikh sect founded by Guru Nanak...[21]

It may easily be perceived and conceded that there was certainly some powerful mystical impulse or enthusiasm at the back of the great Reformation Movements in Europe and India, without which there would have been no revival or re-awakening of the dead and petrified souls which had equally dead and pertified religions to uphold them.

But the crucial question to be probed is the discovery of any original mystic tradition or impulse in India or the East, which gave birth to and sustained so many

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21. Sikh Religion, vol.1, Introduction, p.XI. Martin Luther (1483-1546 A.D.) was a German priest and John Calvin (1509-1564 A.D.) a French preacher. Both were zealous Christian reformers and protagonists of Protestant Movement. Cf. Bhagat Lakshman Singh, Sikh Martyrs, p.15.

religions and theologies during the past three or four thousand years and which had the intrinsic worth or power to stand up against the onslaught of a powerful, dynamic and proselyting foreign religion like Islam and which ultimately in the form of the broader Bhakti Movement and the particular Sikh Movement,[22] developed and fructified into a great nationalistic crusade against all temporal and religious bigotry and tyranny and thus in a matter of two hundred years or so turned the tables on the most aggressive onroads and chauvinstic tyrannies known to the world. We have also to discover and see how Guru Nanak, the great saviour-mystic of the nation came to perform and accomplish what centuries of religious sophistry could not.

Let us now examine Guru Nanak's mystical reaction and response to the ancient and current faiths of his time viz. Hindu, Vedanta, Yoga, Jainism, Bhakti and Islamic Sufism. We may consider, first of all, the Hindu mystic tradition, as it was.

HINDU MYSTIC TRADITION

When we speak of India, and its mystic tradition which is primarily Hindu, in origin and character, we imply

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22. Cf. Fauja Singh's remarks on Sikhism vis-a-vis Bhakti Movement: "Sikhism is one of the most important, if not the only surviving link of the several Bhakti movements that made their appearance in various parts of India during the Medieval period." Sikhism, ed. Fauja Singh and others, art. 'Development of Sikhism under the Gurus', p.1.

the East and the Eastern Mysticism.[23] The Aryan and the Semitic religions all comprise the Eastern matrix, so fruitful for the incidence of religion's growth. "Among living religions", says Radhakrishnan, "there is none which has a Western origin. They have all been cradled in India, Iran of Palestine. Some of them spread to the West."[24] The West, therefore, merely borrowed or inherited the infecting religious tradition from the East, and then lent its peculiar qualities of activism and pragmatism to the quietist and peace-loving tendencies of the typical Eastern religions i.e. Hinduism and Budhism. Thus, we can say that whereas christianity and Islam, under the Western influence became typically Western religions, Hinduism and Buddhism remained typically Eastern.[25]

The Eastern mind has been specially prone to mystic inspiration; in terms of psychology, it has been, and still is, mostly speaking, introvertive, full of introspection and inwardness, while the Western mind, conversely, is primarily extrovertive. In the words of the renowned Indian philosopher, quoted above: "The Western mind is rationalistic and ethical, positivist and practical, while the Eastern mind is more inclined to inward life and intuitive thinking."[26] This

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23. Cf. L.Dickenson, Essay on the Civilizations of India, China and Japan, quoted in Radhakrishnan, East and West in Religion p.46.

24. Loc.cit.

25. Ibid., p.47.

26. Ibid., p.48.

illuminating observation certainly corroborates the common view that Eastern countries and nations are inheritors of a rich mystic tradition from time immemorial.

Stanley Cook also says in affirmation of this truth: "The Greeks with all their acuteness and skill had little real religious instinct. In this respect the more practical West and the more mystical East have always diverged."[27] In India, the common behaviour of an average man of religion has always been to prefer 'other-worldliness' to 'this-worldliness'. The life of spirit has always attracted him, to the detriment even of a balanced healthy life and a socially responsible programme of corporate life. This too much preoccupation with the 'inwardness' of life often gave a slant to the Hindu mind to become too individualistic and insular in character. Guru Nanak is his teachings tried to re-establish this much-wanted ethical balance in the Indian polity of his times.

This emphasis on matters of spirit, as against matters of the world, was not just accidental or extraneous to the Hindu mind. It was something ingrained and deep-seated, in their ethnic and climatic conditions. It was a part of their culture and milieu. The real basis of this preponderating religious tendency was probably their unshakable belief and unalternable faith in the Unknown but inwardly-perceived Divine Reality, called Brahman. Faith became their very life and want

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27. Art. "Jesus Christ", Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol.XII, 1015 (1969 ed.).

of faith, the negation of life. In the words of Radhakrishnan: "Human societies like human beings live by faith and die when faith disappears."[28]

Faith brought into play the mystical quality and the mystic insight in the early Hindu sages whose religion was essentially spiritual and emotional. There was no hampering dogma in their religious liturgy. Dogma comes where spirit is missing. It is only a substitute for the inner spirituality. When men are morally degraded and spiritually improverished (in fact, when they lose the mystic anchor) they catch at some dogma or some cult or sham. In the words of Havell: "In India, religion is hardly a dogma, but a working hypothesis of human conduct, adapted to different stages of spiritual development and different conditions of life."[29]

The Indian mind has always been in search of God and in search of the meaning of life.[30] They always valued direct experience of Reality above every thing else and were never satisfied with mere epistemology or knowledge. The path for them was as important as the spiritual goal. Every vatary of God, (i.e. every Sadhu) in India thus became a potential mystic. The Upanishadic philosophy, in its essence, the message of Bhagavadgita in its true perspective and the Vedantic speculations, especially the Yogic esotericism, are

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28. Recovery of Faith, p.14.

29. Aryan Rule in India, p.170. quoted in IPH.,Vol.1, 261.

30. Loc-cit.

nothing if not mystical in quality and nature. The Hindu mind was basically synthetic, though it often, by lapse and default, became vague and amorphons.

"The dominant character of the Indian Mind," says Radhakrishnan, "which has coloured all its culture and moulded all its thoughts is the spiritual tendency ... It is mysticism, not in the sense of involving the exercise of any mysterious power, but only as insisting on a discipline of human nature, leading to a realization of the spiritual."[31]

The very word for philosophy in Hindu religion is "darsana" which has a mystic connotation. It is from the root 'drs' which means 'to see'. Seeing implies intuitional experience; it is not just knowing or cognition. It appropriately means "a spiritual perception".[32]

Moreover, the Indian mind has always been tradition-loving and respecter of the past. This fact has lent continuity to the Indian religions tradition. Mystic initiation has been a common spiritual practice which was not only a traditional element involving a Guru and a Shishya (or a Sikh) but was also a secret, mysterious process. From mouth to mouth, from person to person, from soul to soul, the mystic tradition of religion in India, has survived from countless centuries right upto the modern times.[33]

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31. IPH, Vol.1, 41.

32. Ibid., p.44.

33. Cf. Sri Aurobindo, quoted in Sisirkumar Ghose, Mystics and Society, pp.39-41.

The Vedic period (1500 B.C. to 600 B.C.) and the Epic period (600 B.C. to A.D.200) of Indian History are the most significant periods for the proliferation of Indian religions tradition in its true mystical aspect. These comprise the upanishuds, Buddhism, Jainism, Shaivism, Vaishnavism and the Bhagavadgita. For Advaita Vedanta and for Bhagti mysticism, we have to turn to the later premedieval and medieval times.

Sri Aurobindo, the great Indian mystic, holds the view that the Vedas are replete with suggestions of secret doctrines and mystic philosophies. He looks upon the gods of the hymns as symbols of the psychological functions. Surya signifies intelligence, Agni will, and Soma feeling. The Veda to him is a mystery religion corresponding to the Orphic and the Eleusinian creeds of ancient Greece.[34] In the words of Aurobindo himself: "One of the leading principles of the mystics was the sacredness and secrecy of self-knowledge of the Gods."[35] Though the philosopher Radhakrishnan does not agree with the mystic Aurobindo in the view discussed above, yet there is no denying the fact that there was enough mystical substance in the Vedic hymns, in the form of spontaneous poetic effusions, which was akin to the early mysteries of Greek

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34. IPH, Vol.1, 69 Cf.MK, 830.

35. Arya, Vol.I, p.60, quoted in Ibid, p.70.

Orphism[36] of the pre-Socratic times. These early Vedic mystics were the counterparts of the Greek Orphic mystics, Heraclitus and Ephisus.[37]

Vedanta Mysticism

Vedanta, or to be more exact, Advaita Vedanta, constitutes the teaching of the Upanishads, which, having been written to form the concluding portion of the Vedas, are named Vedanta i.e. that which comes in the end of the Vedas. By implication and suggestion, it also means "the essence of the Vedic teaching."[38]

Upanishads represent the essential basis of all Hindu mysticism. "There is no important form of Hindu thought, heterodox Buddhism included, which is not rooted in the Upanishads."[39] Schopenhauer, who was born exactly one thousand years after Shankara (who was born in 788 A.D.[40] and is easily regarded as the greatest exponent of the Vedanta Philosophy)

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36. For study of Orphism see W.R.Inge, Mysticism in Religion, Chap., 'Greek Mysticism', p.91. Even it has been claimed by some scholars that "Orphism came from Persia and more probabely from India." Hence the view held by Aurobindo seems to be tenable.

37. Ibid.,p.92.

38. IPH. Vol.1, 138 Cf. also Max Muller, Collected Works (The Vedanta Philosophy),p.15 and MK, 830.

39. Bloomfield, The Religion of the Veda, p.51, quoted in IPH, Vol.1, 138, Cf. MK, 10.

40. Deussen, Outline of the Vedanta, 1905, Preface. Cf. MK,177.

says, in highly laudatory terms, about the Upanishads:

> "In the whole world there is no study so beneficial and so elevating as that of the Upanishads. It has been the solace of my life, it will be the solace of my death." 41

Max Muller, in this connection, remarks: "If philosophy is meant to be a preparation for a happy death, or Euthanasia, I know of no better preparation for it than the

Vedanta Philosophy."

The Upanishads, unsystematic as they are, and even in the words of Max Muller, seem to be "suberversive of all religion" and not only reject the Vedas as useless but call them mischievous,[43] are in themselves "Sudden intuitions or inspirations", which is proof of their mystical quality.

Radhakrishnan says: "The aim of the Upanishads is not so much to reach philosophical truth as to bring peace and freedom to the anxious human spirit."[44]

Their mystical depth is certainly one of the profoundest in the history of all religion. "On the tree of Indian Wisdom there is no fairer flower than the upanishads and no finer fruit than the Vedanta Philosophy."[45]

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41. Max Muller, collected works (The Vedanta Philosophy) p.8. Cf. also the enlightening remarks of Sir William Jones and Victor Cousins, Ibid., pp.9 f. The word "Upanishad" means, etymologically, 'sitting near a person' or the French seance or session, Ibid., p.23. Cf. also Dasgupta, Hindu Mysticism p.28: Upanishad means (according to Shankar) "that which destroys all ignorance and leads us to Brahman". Again: "It has also been interpreted to mean a secret or mystical doctrine or a secret instruction and confidential sitting." (Loc-cit).
42. Collected Works, (The Vedanta Philosophy) p.22.
43. Ibid., p.16. Cf. also IPH. Vol.1, 149.
44. IPH, Vol.1, 138.
45. Deussen, Op.Cit., Preface.

Upanishads, with their emphasis on spirituality and inwardness, are in the nature of a reaction against the vedic formalism and ritualism. This tendency was certainly mystical. The Vedas provide largely an objective study, while the Upanishads tend to engage an inward and subjective attention. "The self-existent pierced the opening of the senses so that they turn outwards; therefore, man looks outward, not inward into himself; some wise man, however, with his eyes closed and wishing for immortality, saw the self behind."[46]

The Upanishadic thought centres round the basic mystic problem of the search for 'real' out of the phenomena of the 'unreal' and thus to discover the "central reality which is infinite existence (sat), absolute truth (cit) and pure delight (ananda)."[47] The favourite Upanishadic prayer is: "Lead me from the unreal to the real, lead me from darkness to light, lead me from death to immortality."[48]

From the highest Vedic concention of the ultimate reality, as Ekam Sat, the Upanishadic thought at once rises to the Vedantic concept of the one absolute Brahman[49] in the form of tat tvam asi[50] ("That art thou") and aham brahm asmi ("I am Brahman").[51]

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46. Katha up., iv. I., quoted in IPH, Vol.1.,145.
47. IPH, Vol.1, 150.
48. Brh. Up. 1. 3. 27., IPH, Vol.II, 151
49. "Brahman seems to have meant originally what bursts forth or breaks forth whether in the shape of thought and word or in the shape of creative power or physical force." Max Muller, Op.Cit., p.22, Cf. also IPH, Vol.1, 173.
50. Chu vi. 8. 7. Deussen, op.cit., p.1.
51. BAU. i. 4. 10. Loc. Cit.

On the one hand, we find in the Upanishads the postulate of the oneness of Brahman or Paramatman with the Jivaatman i.e. "Brahman is the Atman and the Atman is the Brahman",[52] and on the other, the identification of the Brahman-without-word and the Word-Brahman (the significant utterable 'Word' being AUM or OM), as also the identity of the Brahman-without-attributes (i.e. Absolute) and Brahman-with-attributes (called the Nirgun and the Sagun Brahman). The later has been called Ishvara, the Logos of the Greek and Christian mysticism.

From Vedic polytheism (i.e. worshipping many gods) and Henotheism (i.e. the concept of regarding one of the Vedic 'gods' as a supreme one), the Upanishadic thought gradually envolved and apotheosized to the elevated stage of Monotheism, which tended to become more and more monistic in the speculative philosophy of Shankaracharya. Not absolute Monism, but the indefinable Monotheism (in which the Absolute is neither the finite nor the infinite, neither manifested nor unmanifested)[53] is the Upanishadic ideal. Monotheism includes the higher and the lower Brahman or the 'esoteric' and the 'exorteric' Brahman. While the esoteric Brahman is formless (The Nirankar of Guru Nanak)[54] or the attributeless God, the exoteric Brahman is concrete, or with attributes (called gunas or upadhis). Upadhis are the limiting conditions and as such limit the Absolute one in the bounds of time and space, i.e. in the limits of the world,

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52. IPH, Vol.1, 146.

53. Deussen, Op.cit., pp.5 f.

54. Japji,16. "Thou art the eternally-abiding Formless one." (Tu sada salamat Nirankar).

the body, the deeds (Karma) and the consequent illusory state of avidya in which under the effect of Upadhis we see the form but not the underlying esoteric Brahman.

In avidya lies the soul's transmigrations or the cycle of birth and death. Deussen says that it is vidya (Knowledge) that cancels the effect of avidya:[55]

> "The supreme aim of human beings is emancipation,[56] that is the cessation ofthe soul's transmigrations:[57] but this emancipation of the soul from its transmigration is brought about by the recognition of the individual self (Atman) as identical with the highest self (Param-atman), namely Brahman. The entire content of vidya, is consequently, knowledge of the Atman or Brahman, for the two concepts are inter-changeable."

While the higher knowledge (para-vidya) leads to the attainment of the higher Brahman, the lower knowledge (apara-vidya) leads to the attainment of the lower Brahman.[58] The higher knowledge (called samyag-darshna) is the 'right cognition' or the mystical intuition, without which no one can know or realize the Par-Brahman (i.e. the absolute Being). The lower Brahman is regarded as the 'world-soul', and also named the personal God. The more common name is Ishvara. It resides in the individual soul of each human being as a 'psychical principle'.[59]

The great mystical truth underlying all Vedanta philosophy is the knowing and seeing of the self or atman by

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55. On.cit. p.5.

56. i.e. Moksha or Mukti, in religious terminology.

57. i.e. Samsara (Cosmos) or Jagat. See MK, 177.

58. Deussen, on.cit., p.5.

59. Ibid.,p.12.

the atman itself. It is an intuitive process, for as Shankara says, "never canst thou see the seer of seeing",[60] which means that the soul is not knowable or seeable by the senses; it has no objective perception and is only inwardly realized or perceived. For this inner perception, no outer condition or discipline can be effective. Hence it is a matter of divine grace. Just as the mystical realization of truth is unknowable in the objective sense, it is also ineffable in the linguistic sense. What cannot be known, cannot be stated.[61] Radhkrishnan says:

> "The mystic insight is inarticulate. As to a man born blind we cannot explain the beauty of a rainbow or the glory of a sunset, even so to the non-mystic the vision of the mystic cannot be described. 'God put it into my head, and I cannot put it into yours', is the last word of the mystic experience." 62

The Upanishadic religion is essentially esoteric and mystical. It inculcates the three stages of religious consciousness, which are, actually speaking, mystical states viz. Sravana (listening), Mannana (reflection) and nidhidhvasana (contemplative mediation).[63]

The highest mystical state is that of rapture and ecstasy, a condition of ananda or bliss. "Ananda or delight is the highest fruition, where the knower, the known and the knowledge become one."[64] "As the flowing rivers disappear in

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60. Ibid., p.40.
61. Cf. Kena, ii,3; Manduka, ii, I; Katha, i, 3.10. IPH, Vol.I. 175.
62. IPH. Vol.1.178.
63. Ibid., p.230.
64. Ibid., p.165.

the sea, losing their name and form, thus a wise man, freed from name and form, goes to the divine person who is beyond all."[65]

The most mystical concept revealed in the Upanishads is perhaps the concept of 'the fourth state' called the turya.[66] It is the highest mystical state in which the divine principle is empirically perceived. Sometimes it is confused with the third state of dreamless sleep, which is akin to it but is still different. The Mandukya Upanishad points out that the highest is not this dreamless sleep, but another, a fourth state of the soul, a pure intuitional consciousness, where there is no knowledge of objects, external or internal. This state brings out the positive aspect as distinct from the negative aspect of the third state. This Turya is the Atman itself.[67] In fact, the problem of the self or Atman is one of the most important discussed in the Upanishads. It is on this aspect of Vedanta that Shankar laid the greatest emphasis. The self-seeing Atman, it may be said, is decidely a mystical concept.

The use of metaphorical language in illustration of recondite thought in the Upanishads is also a mystical process, for the esoteric meanings cannot be expressed directly and thus imperatively need figurative language. Hence the metaphors: 'the rope appearing to be a snake', 'the spider

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65. Mandukya, iii. 2. 8., IPH., Vol.1, 236.

66. The three lower states being Jagrat (waking) swapan (dream) sushupti (dreamless sleep) Cf. Nikhilananda, Upanishads, Vol.I, 92 ff. Cf. also Nikhilananda, Hinduism, p.58 and MK,448.

67. Mandukya, i. 7. IPH, Vol.1, 160.

and the web' and 'the waves and the occan' are mystical jargon.

The Concept of Maya

The concept of Maya, as it occurs in the Upanishads has deeply mystical ramifications. It is another name for avidya which has been discussed earlier. It involves the highly subtle, almost inexpliable, discussion of the relative position of the Transcendent and the Immanent Brahman. It also involves the question of the unknown cause of creation, of the reality and the unreality of the cosmic existence and of whether the world exists or not, whether it is a mere appearance or is something real. Those are very crucial questions.

The word maya actually occurs in the early Mantras and denotes a kind of magic.[68] It has been mentioned as "cosmic illusion" in the Svetasvatara upanishad: "Know then that prakriti is maya and that the great God is the Lord of maya. The whole universe is filled with objects that are parts of his being."[69] This doctrine was, however, developed in the Vedanta philosophy, in a systematic form, by later thinkers.[70]

In general, the concept of maya basically implies that the world of sense-and-intellect is the sphere of relativity which is neither unreal, illusory or void, nor

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68. Ruth Reyna, Concept of Maya, p.5. Cf. H. Zimmer: Myths and Symbols of Indian Art and Civilization, p.46. "The secret of Maya is the identity of opposites ...", quoted in Stace, Mysticism and Philosophy, p.214.

69. R. Reyna, Concept of Maya, p.7. Cf. MK, 718.

70. Ibid., p.5 Cf. Nikhilananda, Upanishads, p.53.

ultimately real in self-existence, but is a form of manifestation of the absolute spirit which is in essence indeterminable. It is the key to the reconciliation of the timeless perfection of pure Being with the perceptual becoming of the phenomenal world.[71]

Upanishads declare that the world is maya; all that is perceived through our senses or in other words, "any thing beside the supreme self, is illusory ... the world is created by maya, the inscrutable power of the Lord, and is therefore, unreal" and again "duality is an illusion and Non-duality is Ultimate Reality."[72]

The multiplicity perceptible in the universe, independent of Atman, is maya.[73] It is coming down of Brahman from the Absolute to the relative plane. "Maya", says Radhakrishnan, "is the name of the negative principle which lets loose the universal becoming, thereby creating endless agitation and perpetual disquiet."[74]

There are many ways to express the concept of the maya, viz. the change from Being to becoming; the subject becoming the object; the infinite becoming finite; the one becoming many; the motionless becoming moved (the "motionless mover' of Aristotle)[75]; the non-dual (advaita) becoming dual (dvaita) and so on. The purely monistic concept of Godhead

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71. Ruth Reyna, On.cit., Preface, ix. Cf. Jairam Mishr, Guru Nanak Dev Jiwan Aur Darshan (Hindi), p.273.
72. Nikhilananda, quoted in Ibid., p.7 n.
73. (Ruth Reyna) Ibid., p.8.
74. IPH, vol. 1, 35.
75. Ibid., p.39.

expounded by Shankara, was later developed by Ramanuja into the doctrine of Vishishtadvaita, in this very context of the mystic interpretation of the cosmic illusion called maya.

The upanishadic concept of maya, that the world is only maya, was very much akin to the Greak mystical thought propounded by Parmenides and Plato "who asserted the empirical reality to be a mere show, or shadow of reality."[76]

The Vedic Rishis conceived that "the great Omnipresent Atman" which is"greater than heaven, space and earth" is, at the same time, present - "small as a corn of rice" - in man's own self.[77]

The Upanishads repeatedly declare that the duality perceived in the universe, independent of Atman, is maya. The Self or Atman contains in itself, as pure consciousness, the essence and the source of all that exists, nothing is beyond or beside it - only that which appears to be real to the senses and not in the Atman, is the unreal maya. It is in the nature of a veil or curtain which conceals Reality in the eyes of the duality-perceiving seeker. Guru Nanak called this impediment as the "wall of falshood", which must be removed in order that seeker should become "truthful" (Sachiara).[78]

Maya, in fact, is nothing extraneous to the 'indwelling' Reality. It is only a 'superimposition', a 'seeming ', an appearance as a mirage, which seems but is

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76. Nikhilananda, Upanishads, Vol.1. 51.

77. Words within commas refer to the Upanishads, Ibid., 52.

78. Japji, 1.

not. It is the external aspect of the esoteric Brahman but in its essence as real as the Brahman Himself, for it is the primal cause of the Universe, as Brahman is beyond the causal law. It is an essential contingent fact or a mystical conjunct. No one can know Brahman unless he rends the veil of maya, the more one realizes the futility or unreality of maya, the nearer be would be to Brahman.

The maya, being a necessary hurdle, one has to cross it or to transcend it. For a seeker, this mystical transfiguration or metamorphosis is inevitable so that, in mystical language, he may become a butterfly which emerges winged from the prison of the chrisalis.[79]

How paradoxical, this concept of the maya is, one can judge from the mystical fact viz. that which appears is unreal and that which is hidden behind the appearance, is real - and yet both the apparent and the real are one and the same. According to Guru Nanak the conception of maya is a great stratagem (jugat) devised by the Inscrutable Brahman. He says:

"The One (divine) Mother (called Maya) got conceived by strategem and manifestly gave birth to three children."[80]

The three children born of Maya are Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, respectively the creative, sustaining and the

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79. Max Muller Collected Works: Vedanta Philosophy, p.5.

80. Japji, 30, (trans. Dewan Singh, Guru Nanak's Message in Japji, p.145.) See also Tilang, AG, 721. "This body has been processed with maya and tinted with averice. My Lord does not like the robe(of this body), how can this bride (wearing such robe) meet Him in union."

destroying principles or powers of the Divine Being. The *maya* or *avidya* (or what Max Muller calls 'Nescience'),[81] forms the 'object' to the divine 'subject' and both are contradictory to each other (though inwardly, and mystically speaking, they are 'complementary' or rather, identical) in the sense that the subject and the object cannot be one and hence the Vedantic postulate would be, for all human and empirical purposes, as stated in the words of Max Muller: "If the world is real, the Self is not, if the Self is real, the world is not."[82]

The illusory nature of *maya* and its relative unreality does not, however, make its concept untenable or a mere intellectual speculation, as it is sometimes misunderstood in view of the extreme monism propounded by Shankara. As Ramanuja later clarified and revised the whole thesis by postulating a new doctrine of "Qualified non-dualism" (*vishishtadvaita*) superseding the "pure non-dualism" of Shankara, the *maya* is not mere illusion, but on the relative plane it is tangible and real, because it represents the Brahman who has assumed attributes (the three *gunas*, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*) while on the absolute plane it is unreal and non-existent. In fact, admitting the empirical reality of the universe, caused by *Maya*, "the Vedic seers developed an elaborate system of theology, cosmology, ethics, spiritual

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81. *Collected Works*: *Vedanta Philosophy*, p.99, Cf. also Max Muller, *Collected Works*. *Ramakrishna*, p.78.

82. Max Muller, *Collected Works*: *Ramakrishna*, p.90.

disciplines and methods of worship. Their division of Hindu society into four castes and of the individual life into four stages, was based upon their recognition of the relative world.[83]"

The Hindu seers were wise enough to formulate the ideals of righteousness (dharma), wealth (artha), sense pleasure (kama) and final liberation (moksha) because they upheld human values in addition to the spiritual ones. Had they regarded the world as unreal and illusory, they would not have inculcated human values. It shows they viewed maya in its true perspective. The question here is of immediate or relative standpoint and the ultimate or absolute standpoint. The true understanding of Vedanta is to correlate them. "Relativity is maya", says Nikhilananda.[84] It is a working principle, so to say. We have to accept the maya and then to transcend it. By merely regarding it as illusion (mithya) or a mirage, we cannot dimiss the universe. Guru Nanak, in this respect, accepted and upheld the concept of maya and advaita advanced by Ramanuja and later propagated by the Bhagats Namdev, Ramanand, Kabir and others, viz. the world is unreal when viewed apart from its basis in the ultimate reality or Brahman, but when viewed in its relation to Brahman, it is real, in fact, it is all Brahman.[85]

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83. Nikhilanda, Upanishads Vol.1, 54 Cf. also Radhkrishnan Brahma Sutra, Introduction, p.34. See also Nikhilananda Hinduism, p.42.

84. Nikhilananda, Upanishads, Vol.1, 54.

85. Cf. Radhakrishnan, Brahma Sutra, p.34. For Guru Nanak's views, Cf. Var Asa Sloks (Pauri 2 and 10). Cf. also Radhakrishnan, Religion and Society, p.104. He says maya is something not totally unreal, not "mere smoke without fire".

Sadananda defines maya as "something positive, though intangible, which cannot be described as being or as non-being, which is made of three gunas and which is antagonistic to knowledge."[86] The gunas, says Nikhilananda, are the very substance of maya. They are actually mystical substance.[87] Upanishad says: "The one she-goat red, white and black casts many young ones which are fashioned like to her."[88] The Chhandogya Upanishad states that every thing in the universe consists of three elements, namely heat, water and food.[89] These elements are the same three gunas, red, white and black viz. the red (rajas) is emotion, the white (sattva) is goodness and the black (tamas) is darkness or evil.

Maya functions in the world through its two powers: the power of concealment and the power of projection, while it conceals the true nature of Brahman, it projects the world in creation.

Saguna Brahman is the cause of the universe through maya. Maya has no independent existence. It is only the efficient cause of the universe, while Brahman is the material cause.[90]

VEDANTA MYSTICISM AND GURU NANAK

"The Brahma-Sutra of Badarayana", says S.S.

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86. Vedantasara, Quoted in Nikhilananda, Upanishads, pp.55 f.
87. Brahma Sutra, p.56.
88. Loc.cit. (Svet. un. iv. 5.)
89. Loc.cit.
90. Ibid., p.58.

Raghavachar "builds up the system of Vedanta by a process of coordination, substantiation and elucidation, working up the immense body of the insights contained in the Upanishads into an ordered whole."[91]

Raghavachar says further about the mystical aspect of Vedanta:

> "Mystic experience is construed as the direct experiential realization of the identity of the Atman and Brahman. The Yoga technique formulated by Patanjali is harnessed to the monistic realization aimed at. This contemplative mysticism, signifying the absorption of the individual self in the absolute non-dual spirit remains a lasting type of mysticism in the later Hinduism." 92

The Vedanta, especially the Advaita-Vedanta, may be described as Identity-mysticism, as it seeks to establish the identity of Atman and Brahman in the spiritual consciousness.

The Universal aspect of Vedanta and its timelessness, considered in the sense of not being a historical philosophy of religion, makes it essentially mystical.[93] "According to Hinduism, religion is experience and not the mere acceptance of certain time-honoured dogmas or creeds. To know God is the become like God."[94] "From the philosophical stand-point Hinduism is non-dualistic and from the religious stand-point, monotheistic."[95] It may be added, that from mystical standpoint, Hinduism, especially Advaita Vedanta. is universally representative and typical.

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91. Hinduism, ed.,(art. 'Mysticism'),p.74. Cf.5 Dasgupta, Indian Idealism, p.55.

92. Hinduism, ed. (art. 'Mysticism'), p.75.

93. Nikhilananda, Hinduism, p.21.

94. Ibid., p.25.

95. Ibid., 24.

The Upanishadic or Vedanta mysticism is not only universal in nature and essence, but also primal and prehistoric. Marqquette says: "Most if not all of the tenets of other mystical theologies have been formulated at an anterior date in India, often with deeper analytical acumen and more comprehensive scope."[96]

Upanishads provide the first instance in history of the method of negative theology so much extent in Christian and Muslim religions viz. 'He is this, He is that, He is beyond all this'— the well-known method of Neti-Neti. Brahdaranyaka Upanishad says: "He, the self, must be described by No, No. He is incomprehensible, since He cannot be grasped."[97]

Hindu Mysticism (which is predominantly Vedanta mysticism) is very comprehensive and synthetic. From Polytheism of the Vedas, it proceeded towards Pantheism which denotes "the idea of a single and transcendent divine principle, Ishvara, who under his three aspects Brahma Vishnu and Shiva engerders this universe through the operations of Maya which is even the cause of the appearance of the personified aspects of the Holy Trimurti."[98]

From Monism (i.e. Advaitavad) or Non-dualism which implies that "True Being is Sat alone, Being itself, the eternal Brahma, unchanging and unchanged, undivided and without parts, Ekam eva advaitam ... the nirgunam, nirvishesham

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96. Introduction to Comparative Mysticism, P.31.

97. Ibid., p.34.

98. Ibid., p.36.

Brahman ... who is opposed to all alteration (vikara) and to all change, to all beginning (utpada) and becoming (sambhava) ... is purely Atman or Spirit (chit and chaitanyam) i.e. pure consciousness (jnana)"[99] the Vedanta mysticism inevitably proceeds to the pantheistic and dualistic phases of Divine existence, from unity to multiplicity, from oneness to manifoldness. In the words of Otto: "Through the enigmatic power of Maya, there arises in the soul avidya -- not knowing (or better false knowing). Maya superimposes (adhyaropa) upon the reality of the One Being, the deceptive multiplicity of the world."[100]

These mystical concepts, however, become metaphysical speculations and ontological theology in the hands of Shankaracharya, as in the case of Eckhart of Christian mysticism.

The chief features of this Upanishadic mysticism, says Dasgupta, are the earnest and sincere quest for the spiritual illumination and the rapturous delight the sages actually experience.[101] The Upanishads, however, indicate no definite method for arriving at the perception of truth. "One of the fundamental conditions of attaining it is the complete elevation of the moral life including the absolute control of all passions and desires."[102] But, at the same time, it

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99. Otto, Mysticism East and West, p.3.

100. Ibid., p.4.

101. Hindu Mysticism, p.42. Cf. also Dasgupta, Indian Idealism, p.31. "It may be regarded as a sort of mystical idealistic absolutism."

102. Dasgupta, Hindu Mysticism, p.61.

depends, not on our own efforts, but on Grace: "there is something like divine mercy that must be awaited."[103]

The Vedanta mysticism mainly revolves round the concept of Godhead or Divinity. "The Rig Veda describes the Supreme as an inconceivable wonder, a sublime unity, a totality from which light shoots forth to generate out of darkness and emptiness a living universe." "The Absolute appears in a double aspect, eternity and time. Though apparently opposed, they are one in reality ... It is the supreme Purusa or God working on Prakrti or matter."[104]

By way of conclusion, it may be said, that in Vedanta mysticism the elements of religion and theology are subservient to the mystical and speculative aspects. By and large, mystical concepts in their pure and empirical sense, have been broadly enuneiated in the Upanishads which form the basis of Vedanta mysticism.

This is exactly what Guru Nanak emphasized in his teaching while dealing with religion in general and Hinduism in particular. While he attached no special sanctity to the reading or recitation of the four Vedas (which had, incidentally, become the chief occupation and religious motif of the Brahmans and Pandits during the middle ages when Guru Nanak appeared on the scene), he accepted and affirmed the mystical truths expressed in the Upanishads).[105] He used the word 'veda' (rather,

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103. Loc.cit.

104. Radhakrishnan, Brahma Sutra, Introduction, p.128.

105. Cf. Japji, 5 and 38. viz. "The Word ofthe Guru is the highest scripture (Veda). "(Gurmukh Vedang). SSWS, 31. and "Let him strike with the hammer of knowledge". (Ved hathiyar). SSWS, 51.

'ved') to mean spiritual knowledge or mystical illumination, i.e. in its original or literal meaning and not the particular or historical meaning. He combined all the six philosophical schools of Vedic religion into one Divine school of Higher mysticism enunciated by the Primal Guru, that is 'Brahman'.[106]

"Six the systems, six their teachers
And six their different teachings:
The Lord (Guru) of them all is the One Lord,
However various His aspects are;
O brother, follow that system
That sings the Lord's praises
There thy true glory lies."

The essential quality of all religious truth being submission to the Guru (i.e. Divine Preceptor) or the attitude of humility towards the Supreme Being, Guru Nanak went straight to the heart of things and criticised the arrogance and pride even at the highest level of spiritual attainment. Brahma, it is believed, became vain after revealing the Veda and was thus made to repent for his arrogance, by losing the Veda, his rich prize. Guru Nanak Says:[107]

"Brahma did not perceive truth and became arrogant.
When he was beset with the predicament of losing the Veda, he repented.
One who remembers God, only his mind is satisfied.
Such pride (as of Brahma) is a great evil in the world;
One whom the Guru meets, his pride gets resolved by the Guru."

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106. SSWS, 61 (Rag Asa) - Sohila Arti, AG. 12.

107 Gauri, AG., 224.

Brahma, again, by creating the world, became subject to Time and Death, thus losing the principle of absolute eternity. This limitation is not only binding Brahma, but all the celestial Beings (the Devas and Devis of the Hindu Pantheon). Guru Nanak Says:[108]

"First it was Brahma who came under the sway of Death.
He could not probe the inmost depth of the Divine lotus.

He did not obey the Lord and thus came into doubt.

Whoever was born was destroyed by Death.

We were saved by Almighty, who gave us to understand the word of the Guru.

Maya bewitched all the Devas and the Devis.

Death does not spare any one except one who adores the Guru.

The Supreme Lord is Eternal, Unseeable and Unknowable."

Guru Nanak accepts only the One Supreme Being (who is Nirgun as well as Sargun) as fit to be worshipped and adored. No other deity, however, exalted, can take His place or equal Him. Guru Nanak, thus, is strictly monotheistic. He rejects the worship of all the Hindu deities who are created by the Supreme Being and, as such, are subject to the limitations of the Space-Time-Continuum or the contingencies of the all-bewitching Maya. He has, therefore, adversely criticised the common objects of Hindu worship i.e. the avatars or the isht-devas, Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, Rama, Krishna, Durga, Kali, Lakshmi, Parbati and so on. In his uncompromising attitude on this issue, being a

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108. Gauri, AG.,227.

mystic, pure and simple, who does not swerve an inch from his monotheistic purism, Guru Nanak remarks, with all force and emphasis at his command:[109]

> "By creating Ether, the Lord placed in order the Earth and blended together the water and the Fire.
>
> The blind ten-headed Ravana got his own head smitten (by his folly) but how did Rama become exalted by killing him?
>
> What praise of Thine, O Lord, can we utter.
>
> Thou art immanent and immersed in every thing, which thou keepest in mind.
>
> It is the Supreme Lord who has created all beings and controls their lives; but by killing the black serpent, how did Krishna become great?
>
> Whose husband can we say thou art O Lord, and who be regarded as thine spouse; Thou art eternally immersed in all that is.
>
> Brahma went into the narrow channel, with the help of his benefactor Vishnu, in order to probe the universe but in vain.
>
> Ultimately he could not know the extent (of the Lord) but by merely killing Kansa, how did Krishna become great?
>
> By churning the Ocean, the angels and demons, extracted fourteen Ratans (precious things) but they vainly boasted of it.
>
> Nanak says, the truth cannot be hidden; Vishnu intervened and distributed one (Ratan) each to the fighting lot."

Such examples of Guru Nanak's discussion and elucidation of the essential truth in connection with Hindu polytheism and avatarvad can be multiplied from his poetic works but we can, at best, only confine to a general assessment of his response and attitude towards Hinduism, as it would become too voluminous to go into all the details.

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109. ASA, AG., 350-51. Cf. Also Maru, AG, 1037-38.

While questioning and denying the divine infallibility so commonly attached in Hindu religion to the divine incarnations or avatars like Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, Rama, and Krishna, on the rational grounds of their human and anthropomorphic limitations, Guru Nanak, at the same time, evinces in his thought considerable positive affirmation of and concurrence with Vedanta mysticism. Modern writers on Guru Nanak have recently discovered many references in his teachings to the Vedic and upanishadic sutras. A.C. Banerjee, for example, says:

> "Guru Nanak was fully aware of the sanctity and importance assigned to the Vedas by the Hindus. It is hardly likely that he was well read in the Vedas, but his compositions testify to his general acquaintance with their contents." 110

Khushwant Singh, goes still further to affirm;

> "Besides being a Bedi (One who has a knowledge of the Vedas) it is legitimate to conclude that he studied the sacred Hindu texts. Even a casual reading of his hymns reveals the influence of the Rig Veda, the Upanishads, -- notably the Mandukya, Chandogya, Prasna, Katha and the Bhagavad Gita." 111

But this similarity is probably more accidental, than purposive. Mystic thought in various mystical systems is, generally speaking, identical and similar, because the fundamental truths experienced by mystics in different times and places are the same.

In fact, as A.C. Banerjee points out, there are more

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110. Guru Nanak and His Times, p.182.

111. Hymns of Guru Nanak, p.19 (Quoted in Ibid., p.182.f.)

differences and divergencies than similarties and affinities between Vedic thought and Guru Nanak's mystical views. In the words of Banerjee, the differences "Are so fundamental as to make Sikhism a definite protest against the Vedic Way of life."[112]

Guru Nanak's reaction to many Vedic practices and Vedantic beliefs was so sharp and categorical that a most recent writer has clearly stated this fact:

> "Guru Nanak rejected rituals and priests; he rejected the whole concent of varanasrama dharma, and the sancity of deva-bhasha (the language of the gods i.e. Sanskrit). Above all, he rejected the authority of the Vedas, the foundation on which the entire Brahminical system rested from time immemorial. The result was that the Vedic traditions played no recognisable part in the development of Sikhism." 113

It may, however, in all fairness he pointed out that Guru Nanak did not so much differ with and reject the fundamental and mystical aspects of Vedic religion or Hindu theology, as he did their contingent externalities which came to be appended and accreted during the course of historical development and circumstances. He was equally conscious of the eternal divinity in man, as of his pragmatic and physical needs. The merely contemplative and intellectual side of Vedanta philosophy did not appeal to his mystical empiricism.

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112. Guru Nanak and His Times, p.183.

113. Loc.cit. For the use of the vernacular i.e. Panjabi in place of Sanskrit, see I. Banerjee, Evolution of the Khalsa, Vol.1, 141. Cf. also J.S.Grewal, Guru Nanak in History, pp.203 ff.

He simultaneously lived in the moment as well as in eternity.[114] He accepted, rather salvaged, some mystical concepts from the vedanta mysticism, while he rejected so much of superstitious and futile dogma. What he accepted or what spontaneously came under the purview of his own mystic realization, out of the ancient mystical tradition, may be summed up as under.

(i) The dual concept of the non-dual Godhead (developed at a later stage by Ramanuja in reaction to Shankar's rigid Monism or advaita), (ii) the attendant concept of Maya which is the cause of the creation of the universe, under the providential and inexplicable change wrought in the nature of the Absolute Godhead, in the form of Ishvara or the Personal, Lower Brahman, (iii) Brahman's pantheistic immanence in the three gunas, the three states of ignorance caused by the illusory power named Maya, and the fourth transcendental state called Turya, (iv) the threefold concept of Brahman, as Sat-Chit-Anand, (v) the necessity of inwardness and intuition in the search for the hidden Brahman (Param-Atman) in the individual soul (Atman) itself and their complete identification or unity after a mystical realization inwardly achieved, and (vi) complete dedication to and dependence upon the grace and mercy of the Supreme Being (Brahman) for the ultimate realization

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114. Cf. G. S. Mansukhani, Guru Nanak World Teacher. p. 76. "Guru Nanak's Bhagti leads to a dynamic mysticism which is not divorced from the hard facts of real life." Cf. Gurmit Singh, Versatile Guru Nanak, Foreword. Cf. also I. Banerjee, op.cit. p.125. "Guru Nanak had not attempted a destruction of the old order but a reformation to suit the growing needs of the time." Again: "Sikhism ... was a protest against conventionalism and not Hinduism." Ibid., p.143.

of the dualistic-monistic, baffling Reality.[115]

These are some of the common grounds and concurrent premises that inhere in both Vedanta mysticism and Guru Nanak's mysticism.[116] But the interpretation, assimilation and exposition of the said mystical concepts, as we find in Guru Nanak, are, at once, more coherent,[117] integrated and enlightening for the modern spiritual needs of humanity.

Guru Nanak's general attitude towards Hindu religious heritage may be summed up, in the words of Mcleod:

> "He did indeed receive an inheritence and its influence is abundantly evident in all his works, but it would be altogether mistaken to regard him as a mere mediator of other men's ideas. In his hands the inheritance was transformed." 118

BHAGAVADGITA MYSTICISM

The Upanishads, the Brahma Sutra and the Bhagavadgita are the three main canonical works for all schools of Vedanta.[119]

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115. See Infra, Chp. V, for detailed discussion.

116. Guru Nanak's radical differences with the later Brahmanical Hinduism which was caste-ridden and set so much store with idol-worship, pilgrimages and ritualistic discipline, should not confuse a clear perception of his affirmation of some of the aspects of the earlier Hindu mysticism of Vedanta, Yoga and Bhakti, which had their origin and source in the Upanishads. Cf. I. Banerjee, Op.cit.p.128, For Guru Nanak's rejection of the contemporary religions, see J.S.Grewal Guru Nanak in History, Chap.'Contemporary Religion and Guru Nanak', Passim; S.S.Kohli, Philosophy of Guru Nanak,pp. 93-96; Gurmit Singh, Versatile Guru Nanak, Chap. 'Guru Nanak and Hinduism', passim.

117. Cf.W.H.Mcleod, Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion, p.150. "Guru Nanak ... produced a coherent pattern and one which, with some additions by later Gurus, is followed to this day by orthodox Sikhism."

118. Ibid.,p.1.

119. K.R.Sundararajan, art. 'Historical Survey', Hinduism, ed. K.R.Sundararajan and others, p.10.

Collectively they constitute the vedanta philosophy.

Gita is the quintessence of the Upanishadic thought. It is said that the Upanishads are the milch cows, the Gita the milk. Hence it has great mystical potentialities. In this respect it has a close kinship with the Upanishads. M. Sircar says:

> "The central teaching of the Gita, like that of the Upanishads, is confined to the Brahman, the Being, the conception of the transcendence and immanence, for it upholds with the Upanishads, the common belief that the highest end is realized through the knowledge of the Absolute, and the greatest consummation is the quietude in Brahman, which sets doubt at rest." 120

Bhagavadgita even has been termed an Upinashad, so akin it is to its original source.[121] It is a synthesis of various ways and means of spiritual life such as Karma-Yoga, Bhakti-Yoga and Gyan-Yoga.[122] There is much emphasis on the concept of selfless action, which is a sort of divergence from the upanishadic teaching. As Sircar observes: "The Gita is the gospel of knowledge applied to activity. The Upanishads are the gospal of knowledge confined to itself."[123]

The Gita presents a transcendental mysticism with a strong note of devetional consciousness. Hence it is different from the mystical philosophies of Vedanta and Yoga.[124]

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120. Mysticism in Bhagavat Gita, Introduction, pp. 23 f.

121. S.S. Kohli, A Critical Study of Adi Granth, p.267. Cf.also IPH, Vol.1, 522 and 526.

122. Ibid., p.266.

123. M. Sircar, op.cit., p.27.

124. Ibid., p.102.

Besides devotion or Bhakti, Gita lays great emphasis on the solution of a basic ethical question, which is: Arjuna in the midst of strife is confused about his duty and Krishna instructs him to do his duty.[125] "The way of work and the performance of duty is the path of salvation and the kingly sages of ancient times, like Janaka, trode this road."[126]

An 'inner quietness' or 'composure' of the whole self has been emphatically inculcated in Gita. What Shankar calls "in activity rest and in rest activity",[127] is the ultimate ideal presented in this scripture. This 'utter composure' can at times be called faith (Sraddha) which is the true ideal, the emotional background and also the source of this ethic of the Gita. This 'inner relationship' has been expressed in incomparably devout words in Gita:

Man is made by his belief
As he believes, so he is.[128]

Despite the different paths leading to realization discussed in Gita, there is a remarkable attempt at synthesis of a mystical nature in the whole argument underlying the divine composition.[129]

"The Bhagavad Gita", says Marquette, "was really a taking of stock, comparing the doctrines of current religious forms and particularly the two great philosophical

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125. Otto, Mysticism East and West, p.119.
126. Ibid., p.121.
127. Ibid., p.122.
128. Loc.cit.
129. M. Sircar, op.cit.,p.102.

schools which were emerging out of the general religious traditon: the Sankhya and Yoga."[130]

Bhagavagita is the most popular religious poem of Sanskrit literature. It is said to be "the most beautiful, perhaps the only true philosophical song existing in any known tongue."[131]

The initial and dramatic bewilderment of Arjuna in the battlefield is rather significant. His mood of despair is "what the mystics call the dark night of the soul, an essential step in the upward path."[132]

The emphasis on Bhakti in Gita is a direct development of the Upasana of the Upanishads, says Radhakrishnana,[133]

Like Buddhism, Gita also protests against the authority of the Vedas and the extreme hermetical polarities of the Vedic times, laying more emphasis instead on ethical principles.[134] From the contemplative and intellectual aspects of the Vedic religion, Gita came to acquire and absorb purely theistic devotionalism, which was a necessary development commensurate with the changed times.

Krishna's resort to the demonstration of his mystical powers in the form of cosmic vision (Vishvarupa)

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130. Introduction to Comparative Mysticism, p.37.

131. William Von Humboldt, quoted in IPH, Vol.1, 519.

132. IPH,Vol.1, 520. Cf. also S.Dasgupta, Hindu Mysticism,p.118.

133. IPH.,Vol.1. 525.

134. Ibid.,530. Cf.also S.Dasgupta, Indian Idealism,p.59. According to him, the Gita contains elements of Pantheism, Deism and Theism, all fused together into one whole.

to the bewildered Arjuna, is certainly a decisive factor in the Gita's argument.

The creation of the Universe or cosmos through the artifice of maya, according to Gita's author, is a mystical process, for which the mystical name maya has been coined.

To sum up the Gita teaching, we might say that while it insists much on social duties, it recognizes a mystical supra-social state, of the perfect man (Sannvasin) who is transcendent as well as involved in the Universe.

Guru Nanak's response vis-a-vis Gita may be said to comprise his affirmation of Theism and Bhakti Yoga taught in Gita, in place of the earlier Vedantic abstruseness, and his broad concurrence with the basic ethical principle of selfless service and duty enunciated in Gita, as against the Vedic individualism and escapsim from society. What Guru Nanak strongly denounced in Gita was the theory of avatarvad[135] and the basic Vedantic postulate of aham brahm asmi (i.e. 'I am the Brahman)", which was a flagrant deviation from the original Upanishadic concept of tat tvam asi (i.e. "That art Thou)".

This pantheistic self-apotheosis (rather self-conceit) at the highest avatar level, which is probably the greatest conceptual fallancy in Vedanta as well as Gita, is quite alien to the absolute monotheism of Guru Nanak, This worship of

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135. Cf. S.S.Kohli, A Critical Study of Adi Granth, p.267. See also Gurmit Singh, Versatile Guru Nanak, p.150; I Banerjee, Evolution of the Khalsa, p. 99. and G.S. Talib, Guru Nanak: His Personality and Vision, p.112.

endless dieties, beginning with the trinity of Vishnu, Brahma and Mahesh and their numberless incarnations[136] (avatars) inevitably degraded in later times to idol-worship of extreme, even aberrative types, in all the later religious cults, vaishnavism, shaivism, shaktism, tantrism etc., from which more strictly speaking, Kabir and Guru Nanak extricated Hindu theism in the 15th and early 16th century.[137]

Guru Nanak in his own inimitable and inevitable way attempted, in his mystical perception, to strike a synthesis and balance between the rigid (almost untenable), extreme Monism of Shankarcharya, on the one hand and the most unprincipled, extremely degenerated pantheistic idol-worship of later Brahmanical Hinduism, on the other. In this huge task Guru Nanak was, however, preceded by mystics like Ramanjya, and Namdev in the south and Ramanand and Kabir in the north.

Gita, thus speaking, provides a rich ground for a comparative and critical sifting from the view point of Guru Nanak's thought.

YOGA MYSTICISM

Yoga is the great school of the technique of divine union, with its concept of the nature of God and of man and its different methods of union. It asserts that "the love of the Lord is better than much knowledge."[138]

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136. Twenty four and sometimes ten is the recognized number. Cf. for instance, Gurmeet Singh, Loc.cit. A.C.Banerjee, Guru Nanak and His Times, p.169; and J.S.Grewal, Guru Nanak in History, 205 f.

137. I.Banerjee, Loc.Cit.,Gurmit Singh, Loc.Cit.,J.S.Grewal, op.cit. p.207-10.

138. Marquette, Introduction to Comparative Mysticism, p.38.

The Yogi's ambition is to attain 'the exalted liberation' (called Samadhi) by reaching the Fourth state of consciousness, name the Turya, after transcending the three lower states of consciousness, Jagrat, Swapan and Sushupti.[139]

The study of Yoga mysticism includes many spiritual technicalities so peculiar to the study of Vedanta, such as the two aspects of Brahman, the Nirguna and the Saguna Brahm (i.e. the Absolute God and the Creatively-active God named Ishvar); the three great essences of manifested universe, Atma, Pursha and Prakriti; corresponding to these above-named "Causal tiers", the three aspects of the Atman, i.e. Jivatma, Pratyagatma and Paramatma; the three gunas produced by the action of Pursha on Prakriti viz. rajas, sattva and tamas, which have corresponding deities to support them i.e. Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, respectively; the three essential attributes of Ishvara viz. sat, chit and ananda; the four states of consciousness already mentioned; the 27 elements of man i.e. psyche) viz. 5 gyanandryas (senses of perception), 5 Karmandryas (organs of action), 5 pranas (vital breaths), 5 tanmatras (invisible essences), 4 antakarnas (internal mental organs), 3 aspects of atman already mentioned, totalling twenty seven elements; and so on.

The four antakarnas stated above assume special value as they are the vital spiritual entities viz. 1. Manas 2. Buddhi, 3. Chit and 4. Ahamkara.[140]

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139. Ibid., pp. 40-42.

140. Ibid., pp. 39, 40 and 42.

The main schools of Yoga are Hatha Yoga, Laya Yoga, Mantra Yoga, and Bhakti Yoga.[141] Besides these Yogic schools which seek union through Physical and sensuous (specially audatory) means, there are also Yogic schools which seek union through truth, knowledge and wisdom, such as Vidya Yoga, Gyan Yoga and Raja Yoga. Still above these Yogas of thought are the Prana Yoga and the Karma Yoga.[142]

The general technique of all schools is to so completely master the faculty or man that union is reached with its archetype, the divine creative purposive impulse, which gave it birth and keeps it in activity.

Of all these schools Bhakti Yoga is the quest of union through sanctified sentiment. It is the Yoga of love, the greatest of mystic schools.[143]

Emphasis on methodology in Yoga is paramount. The eight fold process includes, Yama (abstention), niyama (observance), asana (posture), pranayama (regulation of breath), pratyahara (withdrawal of the senses), dhyana (fixed attention), dharana (contemplation), and Smadhi (concentration).[144]

Yoga is deeply mystical, but it is not God-Mysticism, it is soul-mysticism.[145] Yoga conforms to the

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141. Ibid., pp.43-45

142. Ibid., pp.46-47. The more common view represents 4 kinds of Yoga, Mantra, Laya, Raja and Hatha. Cf. Max Muller, Collected Works: Ramakrishna, p.8.

143. Marquette, op.cit.,p.43, 45.

144. IPH, Vol. II, 352.

145. Otto, Mysticism East and West, p. 142.

general Indian mystical teaching which consists in the terminology: "atmani, atmanam, ataman," which means: "know the Atman, in the Atman alone, through the Atman."[146]

Otto observes about the Yogic ideal:

> "Yoga has arisen from magical conceptions and practices and it always remains a refined form of magic. Its ultimate goal, the kaivalyam is magical — a miraculous state; it is connected not only with the acquisition of magical powers, the siddhis and the riddhis but it consists in attaining aisvaryam, a supernatural miraculous 'glory' with an abundance of power and knowledge."147

Yoga, thus considered, falls short of theistic principles (like Buddhism) without which no religion becomes a religion in the real sense.

Though rooted in the Vedas (particularly Rig Veda and Atharva Veda) and the Upanishads (especially the Katha, the Svetasvatara, Taittiriya and Maitravani Upanishads) in which it represented the practical side of the theoretical philosophy of Samkhya, and though widely discussed in the Bhagavadgita and tacitly accepted by Buddhism, Yoga, as a system, was formulated and perfected by Patanjali (2nd cen.B.C.) in his Yoga Sutra.[148]

The word Yoga may simply mean "method" or yoking i.e. union of two separate entities. In Patanjali it means the

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146. Ibid., p.33.

147. Ibid., p.142, Cf. also Mohan Singh, Order of Sidha-Yogins, p.15.

148. IPH, Vol.II, 338 ff. Cf. S.S.Raghavachar, 'Hindu Mysticism, art., Hinduism, p.72 "The Puranic Hinduism led to the Bhakti mysticism and the tantric Hinduism cultivated the esoteric mystery-cults partly ritualistic and partly Yogic."

search for the divine and eternal element in man.[149] It has more to do with the 'method' or the Via mystica of the Christian theology than with the theoretical or philosophical content of spiritual idealism. Hence it is primarily a mystical and esoteric study of the ways and means of attaining perfection. Every seeker after truth, thus, in some way or the other, becomes a Yogi in the technical sense, in as much as he has to pass through a spiritual discipline in the strictly pragmatic or empirical sense. No theory can avail when the aim is to tame and conquer the mind. Some method has to be adopted for the achievement of this purpose. And all such methods constitute Yoga, Even Gautam the Buddha had to pass through Yogic discipline, to take one example out of a legion. In this sense, even Brahman has been called a Yogi, because He Himself is the source and teacher of all Yogic methodologies.

Stilling the mind in perfect quientude (as taught by the chinese philosopher Lao Tze)[150] or controlling it by a spiritually synthesizing or harmonizing process involved in the mystical-ethical perception of the Name (as preached by Guru Nanak)[151] seems to be the ultimate object of Yoga.

The Katha Upanishad (iii) says: "our senses are like horses which are always running after their respective sense-objects." Again: "There is a state in which the five senses,

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149. IPH, Vol.II, 337. Cf. MK, 756.

150. Ibid., p.357.

151. Cf. Japji, p.28. AG.6.

thought, intellect, and mind all cease to operate and this highest stage of absolute sense-restraint is called Yoga or spiritual union." (Katha, VI)[152]

In other words, the cessation of all mental states is Yoga. For the attainment of Yoga, moral qualities of purity, contentment, self-surrender, endurance, persistence and dedication to purpose are essential.[153]

Of all branches of Hindu mysticism, Guru Nanak was probably most deeply impressed and affected by the Yoga mystical philosophy. It was apparently as much due to the universal, empirical and ethical character of Yoga as to its mystical and esoteric aspect. Another potent reason for Guru Nanak's special concern with the Yoga way of thought and life was its dominant prevalence and influence in all Northen India during and preceding Guru Nanak's times.[154] He had naturally to give full attention to the great religious problem posed by the widely-demoralizing and unethical spirituality taught by the Kanphata Nath Yogis of the Machhindernath-Gorakhnath origin.

Though Guru Nanak found the contemporary Yoga cult in a most degenerated condition, having reached almost the nadir in the whole history of the ancient Yoga philosophical movement, yet he was not unmindful of some inherent and inceptual fallacies of the ancient Yoga system itself which could form a potential danger to the genuine religious

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152. Dasgupta, Hindu Mysticism, p.62.

153. Ibid., pp.70 and 73.

154. Cf. J.S.Grewal, Guru Nanak in History, pp.111-14 and Sher Singh, Philosophy of Sikhism, p.123.

interests of his age. He, therefore, devoted largest portions of his compositions to discuss, criticise, refute and correct the aspirations and practices of the Yogis.[155] Sidh Gosht, his most philosophical and absorbing composition, is a complete discussion on the subject of Yoga mysticism, and he has made fullest use of the Nath-Yogi terminology.

Rejecting almost all the Yogic practices[156] of his age as utterly futile and unethical, Guru Nanak enunciates his own conception of true Yoga. According to him true Yoga lies in transcending the evil effects of Maya by living actively amidst society and the world:[157]

> "By remaining pure among the impurities of the world, we can find the true practice of Yoga."

The greatest flaw in the Yogic way of thought and life as perceived by Guru Nanak in his own time was the Yogis' persistent aversion to married life, to earning bread and living in society and, above all, to their antinomian, amoral and escapist idologies and practices.[158]

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155. Cf. J.S.Grewal, Guru Nanak in History, p.219 and I.Banerjee Evolution of the Khalsa, p. 98.

156. Cf. Japji, 28. AG,6. The common practices of the Yogis were wearing earrings, besmearing their bodies with ashes, keeping a begging bowl and a staff, blowing conches, wearing a patched coat, keeping matted hair, uttering loudly alakh niranjan and so on.

157. Suhi,AG,730 (Anjan Mahi niranjan Rahiai jog jugat ia paiai).

158. Guru Nanak vanquished the Yogis by superior religious and mystical argument thrice during his travels, at Sumer Mountain, at Gorakhmata (now called Nanak-mata) and Achal Vatala (near Batala, Gurdaspur District). He invariably attacked them at their weakest point, of renouncing the world and cheating people of money and food by overawaing them by display of occult powers, which was utterly futile and cowardly. Cf. Pritam Singh Gill, Doctrine of Guru Nanak, pp. 143 ff.

Since Yogis exerted vast influence on the masses by acquiring and displaying mystical (rather, occult) powers, which is a rare and attractive phenomena in all religions (a close parallel in this respect being the extensive popularity of the miracle-working Muslim mystics called Suffis, who florished contemporaneously with Yogis in the three or four centuries preceding Guru Nanak's advent), it was utmost necessary for Guru Nanak to counteract this negative influence wrought by the spurious and futile Yogic mysticism, by convincing the beguiled and betrayed public of his times, with his more positive, sincere and genuine religious teachings and ideals which advanced social and ethical principles of the highest quality. Even in the mystical domain, he excelled the Yogis by expounding, for instance, the true meaning of the esoteric terms, Anhad Sabad, Sunn (the Sunyata of Buddhism) Niralam, Guru-chela, Chautha-pad, Nirban-pad, Surat-dhun, Surat-sabad, Parvirat-narvirat, Sahj-dhyan, Nij-ghar etc.[159]

BHAKTI MYSTICISM

Bhakti or devotion is a vague term extending from the lowest form of worship to the highest life of realization. It has its origin in the Rig Veda itself and has been in vogue ever since.[160] The word Bhakti was first of all used in the Upanishads and then is mentioned frequently in the Puranas

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159. Siddh Gosht, passim, for Guru Nanak's Yoga mysticism, Cf. Mohan Singh Oberoi, Sikh Mysticism, pp.3-10.

160. IPH, Vol.II, 704. Cf. Darshan Singh, Indian Bhakti Tradition and the Sikh Gurus, pp, 5-7.

as well as Buddhistic and Jaina literature.[161] In the Bhagavad-gita the Bhakti-yoga, in comparison with the other Yogas, finds a dominant note.

Bhakti is a direct development of the upasana of the Upanishads. The love for the Supreme involves the giving up of all else.[162] Only the highest can give us freedom. Only the true Lord Purusottama can serve as the object of devotion. Bhakti needs, above all else, Sraddha or faith. It is emotional attachment distinct from knowledge or action. After Upanishads, the devotional way of the Bhagavats greatly influenced the ideal of Bhakti in Gita. Absolute self-surrender and complete dedication of all work to God mark the conduct of the true devotee.[163]

As a mystic principle, Bhakti combines theism with pantheism. The love of the Lord invariably turns to be the love of the universe, as it is created by the Supreme Being. This is the basis of the true ethical principle involved in Bhakti. Ethics in Gita is thus essentially connected with the spiritual concept of love which underlies Bhakti Yoga.

Hindu mysticism is very comprehensive and synthetic. From Vedic polytheism it proceeded towards pantheism which was the direct result of the Vedantic theory of Ishvarvad and Mayavad and the concept of the divine Trimutri (Brahma-Vishnu-Shiva complex). Vaishnavism which is the true historical

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161. Darshan Singh, op.cit., pp. 9 ff. Cf. Pritam Singh Gill, Doctrine of Guru Nanak, pp. 112-114.

162. IPH, Vol. 1, 525. Cf. MK, 675.

163. Ibid., pp. 558-65.

basis of Bhakti mysticism believes in divine love through the mercy of Ishvara who in the form of Krishna saves his devotees from the clutches of rebirth.[164]

The effusive and unrestrained emotion of love (as between Krishna and the gopis) in the Bhagavata Purana became the most acceptable principle of Bhakti in the later cults of Vaishnavism. Ramanuja's concept of Bhakti was, however, more restrained and organized. According to Ramanuja, Bhakti is loving God with all our mind and with all of our heart. This complete resignation to God is called Prapatti.[165] As a theist, Ramanuja believes that salvation is possible, not through inana and karma, but through bhakti and prasada (grace).[166]

"Bhakti Yoga", says Marquette, "is the quest of union through sanctified santiment. It is the Yoga of love, the greatest of Mystic schools." "It reaches union through the harmonization of the love nature of man with its prescribed destiny which is to manifest, in all its purity, the Divine love of the creator under its treble aspect of life-giver preserver and upholder."[167]

By uniting wholly his love nature with that portion of the divine aspect of love and cohesion which is giving him life, man reaches the divine union of mystic love. Bhakti Yogis adore the objectified, personalized and active

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164. Marquette, Introduction to Comparative Mysticism, p.36.

165. IPH. Vol.II, 705-6.

166. Ibid.,p.703, Cf. J.S.Grewal, Guru Nanak in History pp.121 f.

167. Op.cit. p.45.

aspect of the Infinite Ishvara or Saguna Bhraman.[168]

Bhakti Yoga presents three degrees. The elementary one, Bhava Bhakti, is the worship of the gods through formulas, images, rites etc. The second Ananya Bhakti is the cult of the transcendent but objective monotheistic God. Yekanta Bhakti is interior and silent adoration of the Ineffable Formless ubiquitous Presence.[169]

Bhakti as a way of realization is often connected with the popular story of Bhagat Prahlada in the Vishnu Purana. Ramanuja defines Bhakti "as a contemplation of God unbroken as the smooth end ceaseless flow of oil."[170] Even Prahlada desired from God the satisfaction of divine love at the sense-level. Bhakti involves not only contemplative union but love union which is aesthetic and sensuous. This Bhakti is the mysticism of love.[171]

The Bhagavata Purana (11th century A.D.) is treated as the standard work on bhakti. According to this Purana, "It is the quintessence of the Vedanta philosophy. He who has tasted its nectar-like juice will not be attracted by anything else."[172]

Shandilya Sutra says, bhakti is the highest attachment to God, paranurakti. Again, the Bhagvat Purana says: 'The devotees are my heart and I am the heart of the devotees. They know no one else than me; I know no one else

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168. Loc. Cit.

169. Ibid., 45-46. Cf. Two kinds of Bhakti, Vaidya bhakti and Prema Bhakti. Jairam Mishr, Guru Nanak Dev Jiwan Aur Darshan (Hindi), p. 28

170. S. Dasgupta, Hindu Mysticism, p. 121.

171. Ibid., p. 123.

172. Radhakrishnan, Brahma Sutra, Introduction, p. 168.

than them."[173]

Bhakti in its complete wholeness and theoretical description is dealt, first of all, in Shandilya's Bhakti Sutras and Naradas Bhakti Sutras. For Shandilya, Bhakti is "Supreme devotion to God."[174]

Ramanuja was the principal organizer and exponent of the Bhakti cult. He was influened, besides earlier scriptures, i.e. Upanishads, Vedanta-sutra, Bhagavadgita, Brahma-sutra and so on, by the Bhagavata doctrines and the Bhakti cult of the Alvars. Ramanuja's qualified Monism (Vishishtadvaita) was the conceptual basis of the later Bhakti cult which developed to such mystical heights in the hands of Namadev, Ramanand, Kabir, Guru Nanak, Chaitanya, Vallabha and others. As a religious cult it was first perfected in the south by the mystics known as Alvars and Adiyars, and then it was propogated in the north by Ramanand and other Bhagats mentioned above.[175]

Bhagavat Purana exemplifies the true nature of Bhakti in the following words: Bhakti destroys all past sins. (11.14). Again: "The Lord can be realized by bhakti and by nothing else." "It is the ebullition of feelings and emotions of attachment to God." It is a mad intoxication of love, a soft melting of the heart, sometimes expressed in tears, sometimes in laughter, sometimes in songs and dances

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173. Ibid., p.169.

174. Sh. Bh. Sutra, i.1.2 quoted in Darshan Singh, op.cit. p.23. Cf. Jairam Mishr, Sri Guru Granth Darshan(Hindi), p.282f.

175. Darshan Singh, Ibid.,pp.39-41. For Bhakti vis-a-vis Ramanuja Cf. Sher Singh, Philosophy of Sikhism, pp.105 f.

and also in silence.[176]

The Bhagavat Purana exalts Bhakti above other paths of approach to God i.e. work (Karma) or knowledge, because the spiritual power realised by love raises Bhakti to the highest mystical levels. A true bhagat has so great a passion for God that it consumes all his earthly passions. He is beside himself with this great love of God.[177]

Bhaktishataka of Ramachandra Bharati (13th cen.) is also a valuable treatise on the subject of Bhakti.

Ramanuja's idea of Prapatti may be explained by the metaphor of chatrik's yearning for the water from the clouds. The basic idea behind Prapatti is the belief that God is naturally attracted by a devotee's pure and selfless love and He always abides with such a bhagat and encourages his great love for him.[178]

Chaitanya symbolizes this passionate love as the love between a lover and the beloved -- a man-woman relationship of pure love. He called tender love for God as shanta, service attitude as dasya and intimate love as sakhya -- the highest type of love.

There are still other analogies used by bhagats to express the love of a devotee for God e.g. father and son, master and servant, Lord and slave, teacher and disciple, mother and child, water and fish and so on. The Krishna legend has come very handy to the vaishnava Bhakti cult.[179]

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176. S. Dasgupta, op.cit. p.124.

177. Ibid. p.125.

178. Ibid., p.128. Cf. Tara Chand, Influence of Islam on Indian Culture, p.102.

179. Ibid., p.141, 143.

Vallabha has amplified to idea of grace as a necessary adjunct of the Bhakti philosophy: Only whom God chooses, attains Him.[180]

Guru Nanak, along with Kabir and other Bhagats in the north, inherited the Bhakti movement developed by Ramanuja and Ramanand and propagated it at large to the masses. Dasgupta says about this movement:

> "It followed the line traced by the Gita and Bhagavata. Having been developed in the vernacular, it appealed directly to the masses. It largely dissociated itself from the complex entanglements of Hindu mythology which had enmeshed the devotional creed of spiritual loyalty to God in the legend of Krishna and his associates." 181

Whereas Guru Nanak, like the mystic Kabir, adopted the basic mystical principle inherent in the Bhakti cult, he rejected vehemently other theological accretions of vaishnavism, shaivism and shaktism, such as idol worship, avatarvad, caste-distinctions, asceticism, fasting, pilgrimage, etc. and developed a new Bhakti of his own which may be called the Bhakti of the Name.[182] Mcleod connects Guru Nanak with the Sant tradition of Northern India (known as Nirguna Sampardaya) which was "essentially a synthesis of the three principal dissenting movements of the time -- a compound of elements drawn mainly from vaishnava-bhakti, and the hatha-yoga of the Nath yogis, with a marginal contribution from Sufism."[183]

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180. Ibid., p.146.

181. Ibid., p.156.

182. For Guru Nanak's version of Bhakti (Nam-Bhakti) Cf. G.S. Mansukhani, Guru Nanak: World Teacher, pp.77-81. Cf. also Pritam Singh Gill, Doctrine of Guru Nanak pp.116-18.

183. Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion., P. 152.

SUFI MYSTICISM.

Bhakti mysticism and sufism are kindred mystical cults. Both flourished in medieval times almost contemporaneously, in India. A recent writer says:" The bhakti cult develops into a mighty movement with many rigional ramifications and permeates the entire country. The medieval Hinduism is dominated by this bhakti mysticism." Again, "It is as a powerful variation of this (bhakti) movement that the Sikh religion has to be viewed; it also assimilated some of the insights and principles of the Sufi movement in Islam, owing to an identical affirmation, on the part of Sufism, of the supermacy of love in the approach to God."[184]

This "supermacy of love in the approach to God" is undoubtedly the common ground between Bhakti and Sufi mysticism. While bhakti derived its mystical impulse from Vaishnavaism, as Yoga did from Buddhism, Shaivism and Shaktism (and both of them had their inceptual source in the upanishads and Bhagavadgita), the Sufi mysticism, specially in India joined hands both with Bhakti and Yoga. It was a unique mystical synthesis that came to formulate the mystical tenets of Sufism.

"Sufism", says Tara Chand, "is a complex phenomenon; it is like a stream which gathers volume by the joining of tributaries from many lands ... Hinduism and Buddhism supplied a number of ideas ... "[185]

Nicholson also regards Sufism, or tasawwuf as 'a complex thing', calling it 'undefinable' in the sense

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184. S.S.Raghavachar, 'Hindu Mysticism' (art.), Hinduism, p.75 f.

185. Influence of Islam on Indian Culture, p.63.

that all mysticism is undefinable and ineffable.[186] All the same, he has offered a few definitions: that "it is control of the faculties and observance of the breaths;" that it is "to possess nothing and to be possessed by nothing;" that it is "wholly self-discipline"; "that actions should be passing over the Sufi which are known to God only and that he should always be with God in a way that is known to God only;" that it is "to put away what thou hast in thy head, to give what thou hast in hand, and not to recoil from whatsoever befalls thee;" and "that God should make thee die to thyself and should make thee live in Him."[187]

The Greek word 'mystic' is exactly what in Arabic, Persian and Turkish languages is implied by the term 'Sufi', with the only difference that a Sufi is strictly a 'Muslim mystic'.[188] Noldeke has conclusively shown that the name 'Sufi' is derived from suf (wool) and was applied to those asectics who wore coarse woollen clothes, as a sign of penitence, for "the earliest Sufis were in fact ascetics and quietists rather than mystics."[189]

However, varied sources be conceived for the genesis and origin of Sufism, such as Christianity, Buddhism,

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186. Mystics of Islam, pp.9, 25 Cf. schuon who offers a definition of tasawwuf:" It coincides according to tradition with ihsan and ihsan is 'that thou shouldest adore God as if thou didst see Him and, if thou dost not see Him, yet He seeth thee'". Understanding Islam, trans. D.M. Matheson, p.154.

187. Ibid., pp. 26 f.

188. Ibid., p. 3 Cf. MK, 168.

189. Loc. Cit. Cf. J.A. Subhan, Sufism, pp.6, 8.

Neoplatonism, Vedanta, Gnosticism, etc., the fact remains that koran is the most authentic source, for Mohammed himself was a mystic and was thus the first Sufi, and he felt God both as transcendent and immanent. Islam, as D.B. Macdonald points out, is not without pantheistic tendencies. He says that "all thinking, religious Moslems are mystics" and he adds, "All, too, are pantheists, but some do not know it."[190]

The Sufi path called 'tariqat' is all-important in Sufism, just as in Yoga and Bhakti mysticism the real emphasis is on the method and manner of approach to the spiritual problem and not the problem itself. The two higher states to 'tariqat' are 'ma'rifat' and 'haqiqat' (Gnosis and Truth). The oldest available Sufi treatise Kitab al-Luma given seven stages (1) Repentence, (2) Abstinence, (3) renunciation, (4) poverty, (5) patience, (6) trust in God, (7) satisfaction.[191]

Fana, Baqa, Yaqin, Ishq, Dhikr, Muraqabat, Firasat are some of the well-known positive and cardinal Sufi terms. Some of the metaphorical Sufi terms are Wajd, sama, 'dhawq, shirb, ghaybat, jadhbat and sukr. These metaphors, more or less, imply 'ecstasy'.[192] Love of music has a special mystic appeal to the rapture-loving Sufi, as Hujwiri (author of Kashf al-Mahjul) explains at length. So does Jami praise the music of Sama' in his Lives of the Saints.

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190. Nicholson, op.cit. pp.21,23 Cf. Subhan, op.cit., pp.p f.

191. Nicholson, op.cit., pp.28 f.

192. Ibid., p.59.

Love of God is the most essential concept of Sufism, just as it is the innermost truth in Bhakti mysticism, Ibn al-'Arabi declares that no religion is more sublime than a religion of love and longing for God.[193] Love has its pantheistic efflorescence in the form of universal mercy and charity so natural to a Sufi. The higher Sufi mysticism, as represented by Jalaluddin Rumi, teaches that "the phenomenal is a bridge to the Real."[194]

The Muslim saint is commonly known as a wali (plural, awaliya) The supreme head in the heirarchy of saints or awliya is entitled Qutb (Axis) -- the most eminent Sufi of his age. Below in rank to the Qutb, in descending order, according to Hujwiri, are three Nuqaba, four Awtad, seven Abrar, forty Abdal and three hundred Akhyar. A Qutb is also called Ghawth.[195]

A Sufi is also sometimes called dervesh or fakir. Hagiography is a special mark of the Sufi cultus. There are many orders of the Sufis known in the particular name of the patron-saint or the peculiar ideology involved. The great sufi Murshid (Guru) or Shaikh is the pivotal figure round which the whole Sufi spirituality revolves. The disciple or murid must obey and venerate the Murshid so that his mystical progress is ensured. Miracle-working is a favourite achievement of the Sufi adepts. In fact, the whole Sufi

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193. Ibid., p. 105.

194. Ibid., p. 109.

195. Subhan, Sufism, pp. 105-7, Cf. Nicholson, op.cit. p. 124. Both authors differ in the order and names of the cadres of these higher categories of Sufis.

process and ideal has mystical ramifications.

Ibn al-'Arabi developed the highly mystical concept of the Perfect-man (Insan-al-Kamil) which was later discussed in detail by his disciple al-Jili. As Louis Massignon shows in his Kitab al-Tawasin (Paris, 1913), the Vedantic tour de force of Husayn Ibn Mansur al-Hallaj who was executed at Bhaghdad in 923 A.D. for uttering the blasphemous formula: "Ana 'I-Haqq" ("I am God"), was the profoundest Sufi apotheosis which was mystically linked by Ibn al-'Arabi with the abstruse notions of the halul (incarnation) and ittihad (identification), the fusion of nasut and lahut and ultimately with the concepts of the 'personal deification' and the 'impersonal monism'.[196] Extreme monism and extreme pantheism have thus got mingled up in Sufism. Sufism, in fact, is a higher thinking or a free thinking,[197] as all mysticism is a free-thinking. It is a 'take off' from the dogma-level in Islamic religion.

Speaking of Sufi practice, Subhan says:

> "Sufism is a description of the adventures of a soul. It speaks of the seeker after God as a Salik or a "traveller" and of the progress in the spiritual life as a Suluk, a "travel" or "Journey" along which he is guided by a Murshid or Pir, a "guide" or an "elder", who has already attained the goal by completing the journey, and is thus qualified to lead a seeker, now his Murid, an "aspirant" to the attainment of Ma'rifat, "the knowledge of God." 198

The Sufi path called Tariqat or 'the way' is corresponding to the Chinese Tao, the Via-Mystica of Christian

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196. Ibid., pp.149 ff. Cf. Subhan, op.cit., p.22. (for Hallj), pp.53, 60, 63, (for Jili).

197. Cf. K.A.Nizami, art. 'Mysticism', Islam, ed.,p.51.

198. Op.cit.,p.67.

theology, the Marg or Panth of Sikh Mysticism, the Dhamma-pada of Buddhism, and the Yoga of Hindu theism, It embodies the old Greek idea of 'Method' (Meta-en-odos) i.e. 'the way beyond'. This mystic path or methodus is actually a process of self-discipline.[199]

The sufi cosmogony or cosmogenesis has Christian, Neoplatonistic and Buddhistic ramifications. The seven cosmic planes accepted by the Sufis are Alim-i-sughra, Nasut, Misl, Malkut, Jabarut, Lahut, and Hahut, in ascending order.[200] Sufism conceives, like Vedanta, two aspects of God (in fact, three) the Absolute (Allah) and the Logos (Al-Haqq).[201]

The Sufi concept of Nirvana or Moksha called Fana (or fana al-fana) which is certainly akin to (or perhaps borrowed from) Buddhistic and Vedantic sources, means complete absorption or passing away and attenuation of the self. It has four evolutionary stages, Fana fi'l Shaikh, Fana fi'l-Rasul, Fana fillah, and Fana al-fana.[202]

Though Sufi mysticism has been called hot and passionate in contrast with the cool and abstract mysticism of Hindu Advaita, yet it tries to create a synthesis between the two, i.e. between emotional rapture and gnosis. Baba Farid, the Chishti Sufi of Pakpattan, for instance, "believed in the life of Sahv (sobriety) and he could not allow his

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199. Marquette, Introduction to Comparative Mysticism, p.25.

200. Ibid., p.175.

201. Iqbal, Development of Metaphysics in Persia, pp.162 ff. Cf. MK, 168.

202. Ibid.,p.178 Cf. Stace, Mysticism and Philosophy, p.227.

disciples to develop interest in the life of uncontrolled ecstasy."[203]

Sufism has been called the soul or the '<u>Kernel</u>' of Islam. It has, therefore, to be vigilant and guarded whenever pantheistic and heretical incarnationary theories accost it, as in the case of Mansur, Shamas Tabrez, Sarmad and others there was a severe dectrinal conflict. The best axiom for Sufism, therefore, would be: "Islam is the meeting between God as such and man as such." Again: "The Sufi after the pattern of the Prophet, wants neither 'to be God' nor 'to be other than God'..."[204]

A word about <u>Mo'jiza</u> and <u>Karamat</u>, with their subtle difference of the former belonging to the Prophethood and the latter to sainthood.[205] Most of the miracles (<u>karamat</u>) extant about Sufi fakirs, are probably later inventions or accretions to the hagiographic process, very few of them being genuine. Higher Sufism actually disowns and discourages them. The true Muslim saint does not say that he has wrought a miracle: he says, "a miracle was granted or manifested to me." "A saint would be none the less a saint," says Qushayri, "if no miracles were wrought by him in the world." Similarly,

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203. K.A.Nizzmi, <u>Life and Times of Shaikh Farid-ud-Din Ganj-i-Shakar</u>, p.98 Cf. for cool and fervent types of mysticism, R.Mukerjee, <u>Theory and Art of Mysticism</u>, p.5. Cf. also Otto, <u>Mysticism East and West</u>, pp.151 f. and Balbir Singh, <u>Kalam di Karamat</u> (essay: 'Panjabi di Ramz-bhari Kavita') in Panjabi. pp.173 f.
204. Schuon, <u>Understanding Islam</u> (trans. D.M. Matheson), pp.13., 104. 106.
205. Subhan, <u>Sufism</u>, p.109.

Bayazid says: "During my novitiate God used to bring before me wonders and miracles, but I paid no heed to them; and when He saw that I did so, He gave me the means of attaining to knowledge of Himself."[206] Sufism in this respect largely agrees with Guru Nanak's views on this subject. He says: "The Riddhis and Siddhis (i.e. miracles) are extraneous occupation."[207]

India proved a fruitful ground for the ingress of many great Sufis from Middle East countries, earliest among whom probably was Hujwiri of Lahore (d.1071 A.D.) who exerted great influence among the masses and converted many to his faith. He was followed by the great Qadri and Chishti Sufis. While Indian thought created deep impact on Sufism, as is widely admitted, the Sufi teaching, in return, also left a lasting impression on the Indian mystic thought. So it was a mutual and reciprocal intercourse. The Bhakti movement started by Guru Nanak in the Panjab in early 16th century brought Hindu Bhakti theology and the Islamic Sufism still nearer to each other. The Sufi Pir and the Hindu or Sikh Guru became almost synonymous terms.[208]

Sylvestra de Sacy thought that the idea of union of soul with God reached Persia from India. Goethe supported this

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206. Nicholson, Mystics of Islam, pp.130-32. Cf. Subhan, op.cit. 109-11.

207. Japji, 29. (Riddh Siddh avara sad).

208. Guru Nanak was often lovingly called: Nanak Shah Fakir, Hindu ka Guru, Muslim Ka Pir. Cf.Mcleod, op.cit. p.158. and Sher Singh, Philosophy of Sikhism, pp.90 f.

theory in his West Ostlicher Divan.[209]

Though monasticism had no place in Islam (as it is revealed in Quran: "In Islam there is no monachism") yet the Sufi orders and institutions began to be formed not long after the demise of the Prophet. This was probably an exotic influence, probably of Judaism and Christianity and possibly of Buddhism.

As Sufism developed in India, its affinity with Indian religions gradually increased so much so that scholars have recently discovered many identical mystical views between sufism and Indian thought.[210] Emphasis on the devotional aspect is perhaps the nearest meeting-point between the two. Thus, a popular definition of Sufism given by Tara Chand says: " "Sufism indeed was a religion of intense devotion; love was its passion; poetry, song and dance its worship; and passing away in God its ideal."[211]

Love of music, emphasis on devotion (Bhakti or Ishq), strict monotheism, limited pantheism (Sufi, Hama ust) spiritual novitiate under a Guru (Sufi, Murshid or Pir) deepest faith and trust in God, a higher ethos (virtues like humility, tolerance, charity, etc.) and intuitional approach to God, are some of the points in Sufism which came nearest to Guru Nanak's message and teaching. It is mostly a mystical synchronization. But since there are many points of mutual divergence also, as suggested by Mcleod, the Sufi

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209. Max Muller, Collected Works: Theosophy or Psychological Religion, art. 'Sufism' p.336.

210. Cf. Subhan, Sufism, pp.143 ff.

211. Influence of Islam on Indian Culture, p.83.

influence on Guru Nanak may be almost ruled out, because the similarities were only coincidental and originally caused.[212]

CONCLUDING ASSESSMENT

In the end, Guru Nanak's total and general response to the Indian mystic tradition can be summed up in the words of G.C.Narang: "Nanak respected every religion so far as the real essence of it was concerned but regarded each one of them with contempt where its votaries stopped short at the mechanical part of it."[213] What the learned writer implies by the real essence of religion is obviously its mystical aspect and the mechanical part is the ritualism or Karam-Kand which later Hinduism had adopted as it 'Brahmanical' faith. He further observes that Sikhism was "a phase of Hindu religious revival and has in consequence, retained all essential features of real Hinduism."[214] (emphasis on real added). The 'real Hinduism' evidently is the ancient Hinduism of Vedanta mysticism anterior to Buddhistic reactions and accretions.

Tara Chand, however, takes a different view of Guru Nanak's religions teaching: "The mission of Nanak was the unification of the Hindu and the Mussalman."[215] This view, also held by some other authors, does not hold ground, because Guru Nanak was not after synthesis or eclecticism but wanted a new religion or dispensation. According to J.S.Grewal, it was no Hindu-Muslim rapproachement but a new religious pattern evolved

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212. Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion, pp.158-63 Cf.also J.S. Grewal, Guru Nanak in History, pp.231 f.

213. Transformation of Sikhism, p.387.

214. Ibid., p.379.

215. Influence of Islam on Indian Culture, p.168.

by the Guru on the basis of his originality.[216] Again: "On the whole therefore, we have no hesitation in suggesting that Guru Nanak's message was meant to transcend Islam, as it was meant to transcend Hinduism."[217]

Teja Singh is very much near truth when he says: "The way of religion, as shown by Sikhism, is not a set of doctrines, but a way of life lived according to a definite model."[218] The Model referred to is the mystical person of the Guru who is the pivotal figure in Guru Nanak's religious thought. In Guru Nanak, as a matter of fact, the Indian religious tradition, which is essentially a mystic tradition, reached the culminating point, after a long historical process of cultural assimilation. It has been said: "But for the Vedas there would be no Upanishads, but for the Upanishads, there would be no Buddha. These four stages (the fourth being the Bhakti School) are interdependent. Each led to the next and all the first three culminated in the Bhakti or Devotional School."[219]

The Bhakti Movement which "exemplified best and fullest in Nanak"[220] was certainly a definite and positive reaction against a dead, mechanical Brahmanism of the early medieval times.

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216. From Guru Nanak to Maharaja Ranjit Singh: Essays in Sikh History, pp.1 f.

217. Ibid., p.26.

218. Essays in Sikhism, p.51.

219. Fraser and Edwards, Tukaram, p.xii, quoted in Mohan Singh Dewana, History of Panjabi Literature, p.13 n.

220. Mohan Singh Dewana, Ibid., p.14.

Guru Nanak's mysticism, says Darshan Singh, was "a revolt against the perpetuated religious mechanism. It is, in itself, a way, a gradual process of development -- a way of detachment and attachment, of leaving and embracing."[221]

Gopal Singh makes the point further clear: "Sikhism cannot be understood as a philosophy, but as a way of life, as a mystic rather than a metaphysical path. It is a strictly monotheistic religion."[222]

Connecting Sikhism with the Indian religious heritage, Loehlin concludes that "although the foundation of Sikhism is Hindu, in that it everywhere assumes Karma and transmigration and accepts the Hindu pantheon; yet the superstructure is pervaded with Sufi materials which blend, on the whole, harmoniously with those of Hindu mysticism of the bhakti type."[223]

Whereas it is natural, almost inevitable, to establish Guru Nanak's contact with the kindred and antecedent religions, it is more important to realize that his mystical thought transcended the existing ground, thereby acquiring fresh hues and nuances of originality.

Arnold Toynbee, the well-known historian and historical thinker, says:

> "Perhaps Nanak himself would have modestly disclaimed the title of 'founder'. He might have preferred to say that he was merely bringing to light, and gathering together, the cardinal religious truths and precepts that had been seattered, in explicit form or implicitely, through the religions legacies

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221. Religion of Guru Nanak, pp.52 f.

222. Religion of the Sikhs, p.30.

223. Sikhs and their Scriptures, p.66.

> of a number of forerunners of his. For Nanak the fundamental truth was that, for a human being, the approach to God lies through self-abnegation and this is indeed the chief message of most of the higher religions that have made their appearance up to date." 224

Toynbee is, however, more specific when he regards Sikhism as a synthetic religion. "The Sikh religion might be described, not inaccurately, as a vision of this Hindu-Muslim common ground." He calls this achievement "a noble spiritual triumph; and sikhs may well be proud of their religion's ethos and origin."[225] But this historically based view is not probably the whole truth about Sikhism, because this new religion was not merely the product of historical circumstances but was rather the fruition of the great mystic Guru's original and positive realization of religious truth.

Radhakrishnan has rightly discovered, in Guru Nanak and other Guru's teachings contained in Adi Granth', a wide range of mystical emotion, intimate expressions of the personal realization of God and rapturous hymns of divine love."[226] He says further: "At a time when men were conscious of failure, Nanak appeared to renovate the spirit of religion and humanity."[227]

Comparing Guru Nanak with Kabir (a widely recognized analogy in the matter of synthetical efflorescence of the Bhakti movement) Mcleod has discovered in Guru Nanak "a coherent pattern" of great organizational and ethical value which the purely mystical genius of kabir could not establish -- a pattern

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224. SSWS, Foreword. p.9.

225. Ibid., p.10

226. Ibid., Introduction, p.17.

227. Ibid.,p.18.

which has subsisted upto the present time.[228]

Mcleod has made a further significant analysis about Guru Nanak's relationship with the antecedent Sant tradition in which he includes the Vaishnava bhakti, the hatha-yoga of the Nath Yogis, and to some extent, Sufism."[229] He has summed up the whole relevant discussion in the following words:

> "It is accordingly incorrect to interpret the religion of Guru Nanak as a synthesis of Hindu belief and Islam. It is indeed a synthesis but one in which Islamic elements are relatively unimportant. The pattern evolved by Guru Nanak is a reworking of the Sant synthesis, one which does not depart far from sant sources as far as its fundamental components are concerned." 230

Some of the mystical concepts of Guru Nanak such as the Sabad, the Nam, the Guru and the Hukam, according to Mcleod, are concepts originally evolved and explicitly developed by Guru Nanak, far beyond what they were in the works of earlier Sants.[231]

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228. Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion, pp.149 f. The baseless myth of Guru Nanak being a disciple of Kabir and vice-versa, has by now been thoroughly exploded and rejected. Besides some Indian authors, even Westerners like Westcott upheld this former theory, see his Kabir and the Kabir Panth, pp. 1-2. For a strong refutation of this myth, see Mohan Singh Dewana, History of Panjabi Literature, pp.24-27 and Mcleod: "there is no sound evidence to support the popular tradition that Guru Nanak met Kabir and little to suggest that he knew any of his works." Op.cit.,p.157. Even if we suppose they had met, there is no reason to assume that Guru Nanak accepted him as his spiritual guide, because Guru Nanak never accepted any human being as his Guru - only the Supreme Being was his Guru. See Supra Chap.III. Inclusion of Kabir's Bani in Adi Granth shows only the mystical affinity between the two great mystics. This affinity probably led Max Muller to say that Kabir was the greatest disciple of Nanak. Auld Lang Syn, p.71.

229. Op.cit. p.152. See also Supra, f.n.183.

230. Ibid., p.161.

231. Loc.Cit.

Cunningham, Macauliffe and Dorothy Field have explicitly accepted and affirmed the orthodox Sikh view that Sikhism is a new and separate world religion and that it is a religion in its own right and as such cannot be regarded as somethihg eclectic or syncretic.[232]

"Each religion", says D.S.Maini, "has its own unique raison d' etre and afflatus. It is called into being at a given time in history and has an ineluctable destiny."[233]

The greatest religious achievement of Guru Nanak and his chief merit as a prophet and founder of the most modern world religion is his unique organisational and nation-building quality, which Cunningham was the first writer to discover and express in his famous words:

> "They (i.e. other contemporary and earlier religious leaders like Ramanand, Gorakh, Chaitanya, Kabir and Vallabh) perfected forms of dissent rather than planted the germs of nations and their sects remain to this day as they left them. It was reserved for Nanak to perceive the true principles of reform, and to lay those broad foundations which enabled his successor Gobind to fire the minds of his countrymen with a new nationality, and to give practical effects to the doctrine that the lowest is equal with the highest, in race as in creed, in political rights as in religious hopes."[234]

This statement clearly shows that Guru Nanak was unique as a mystic and was not a reclusive and lop-sided preceptor of a limited circle of devotees, but a world teacher

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232. For this interesting discussion see Sher Singh, Philosophy of Sikhism, pp.89 f. Cunningham, History of the Sikhs, p.34; Macauliffe, Sikh Religion, p.Liv, Dorothy Field, Religion of the Sikhs, p.10.

233. Art. "Guru Nanak and Sikhism," Sikh Review, Dec. 69 - Jan, 70 Number.

234. History of the Sikhs, p.34 Cf. Niharranjan Ray, Sikh Gurus and the Sikh Society, p.84.

and saviour, with a remarkable capacity of laying "broad foundations" and everlasting institutions.

As regards Guru Nanak's courage of conviction and termerity of belief (a proof of his mystical contact with Godhead), the words of G.C.Narang are significant: "Rama and Krishna had received the homage of everyone as Divine beings. It was Nanak who boldly questioned their divinity and brought them down to the level of mortals ... Guru Gobind Singh went further and stated: 'He created millions of worms like Krishna, made many Ramas and destroyed them. Many Mohammads came into the world. All died when their time expired."[235]

This relentless and absolute faith in one God, termed as monotheism (tauhid), was the root from which all mystical power of Guru Nanak stemmed. S.A.A. Razvi says: "Guru Nanak's intense faith in monotheism is the keystone of the structure of his thought."[236] In the words of Latif: "The Doctrines of Nanak were those of pure deism."[237] On the basis of this great emphasis on deism or theism in Guru Nanak, as if his foremost religious preoccupation, Mcleod regards the word 'theology' as the keyword of his whole mystical thought.[238]

A word, in the end, about Arnold Toynbee's historical views in his voluminous Study of History (10 vols.) as discussed

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235. Transformation of Sikhism, p. 384.

236. Art."Guru Nanak and Sufism, "Sikh Review, Dec.'69 - Jan.'70.

237. History of the Panjab, p.246.

238. Op.cit. p.148.

by J.S.Grewal in a most recent study, may be useful. He looks upon rise of Sikhism as a creative response to the challenge presented by Islam. Again he calls it a Higher Religion that was meant to serve as a chrysalis for a new society to rise on the ruins of the disintegrating Hindu civilization.[239]

As Niharranjan Ray points out, Sikhism and Sikh society would not have been what they are if they had not gone through the dialectic process that any confrontation generates within a given society, its religion and way of life.[240]

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From Guru Nanak to Maharaja Ranjit Singh:

239. Essays in Sikh History, p.142.

240. Sikh Gurus and the Sikh Society, p.78.

CHAPTER IV.

GURU NANAK AS A MYSTIC

PROLEGOMENA

What characterizes a true mystic? It is, indeed, a baffling question. Is he humanized divinity or divinated humanity? Probably he is a man raised to the highest divine power or an epitomized spiritual universe. He is a Perfect Man or a God-man. In the words of carlyle, he is 'the original man', 'a kind of Hero'. 'a sincere man','a Great Man', 'a Teacher and Captain of soul and of body'.[1]

"Worship of a Hero", says carlyle, "is transcendent admiration of a Great Man". Again: "Society is founded on Hero-worship."[2] But how to designate such a hero or great man? To quote the same writer further:

> "Such a man is what we call an original man; he comes to us at first hand. A messanger he, sent from the Infinite Unknown with tidings to us. We may call him Poet, Prophet, God; -- in one way or other, we all feel that the words he utters are as no other man's words. Direct from the Inner Fact of things; -- he lives, and has to live, in daily communion with that." 3

Carlyle has used the awesome metaphor of lightning for the great man:

> "The great man, with his free force direct out of God's own hand, is the lightning. His word is the wise healing word which all can believe in. All blazes round him now, when he has once struck on it, into fire like his own." 4

These are blazing words about a blazing truth. Perhaps no trait of a mystic is greater than sincerity. The

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1. Heroes and Hero-worship, pp.17,19,28,29,60, 61.
2. Ibid., p.15.
3. Ibid., p.61. Cf.Bhai Vir Singh, Sabh te vada satgur Nanak,ed. Prem Singh, p.73.
4. Ibid., p.17.

same powerful writer remarks: "I should say <u>sincerity</u>, a deep great, genuine sincerity, is the first characteristic of all men in any way heroic."[5]

Such a God-inspired person must be regarded as an awe-inspiring personality -- a lightning that consumas the fuel of all evil and falsehood -- a dazzling effulgence that floods with piercing light the darkest corners within and without all men.

Ghalib, the mystic poet, so aptly remarks:

"The world remained peopled for want of dynamic-souled persons.

In proportion as we find the cups and the goblet filled, the tavern is empty to the same ratio." 6

Countless stars make way for the appearance of the orient sun. Similarly, innumerable men live in vain and die in disgrace, so that a mystic may be born to save them.

The mystic has no concern or eye for the passing show or the fleeting pageant of life. He goes to the inner fact, to the real basis or the substratum: to the very bottom of things.[7]

"A Hero, as I repeat", says Carlyle, "has this first distinction which indeed we may call first and last, the Alpha and Omega of his whole Heroism. That he looks through the show of things into <u>things</u>."[8]

The mystic simultaneously remains and lives immersed in God as well as projected and fixed as an individualized

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5. <u>IBid</u>., p.60.

6. <u>Diwan-i-Urdu</u>, Radif ya.

7. F.Younghusband, <u>Modern Mystics</u>, p.19 (Introduction): "for all things in the end become what they at bottom are."

8. Carlyle, <u>op.cit</u>., p.73.

external reality.

Younghusband says:

> "A mystic may be enthralled by the spirit of the universe and yet retain his individuality. He may be possessed by the Spirit and yet be himself. Undoubtedly, for the time being, while he is actually enjoying the mystical experience, he is overwhelmed by the Spirit. He is entirely over-powered; and resistance or self-assertion are then wholly out of the question. Yet he does not remain overpowered. He recovers himself. And on recovery he finds he is a far greater self than before he was enthralled by the Spirit."[9]

GURU NANAK, A MYSTIC GENUIUS

Guru Nanak as a mystic clearly possessed this dual quality, this paradoxical reality, of being a self and a non-self and of embodying divinity as well as humanity, in the same breath. He abundantly represented, in his divine person, the rarest traits of a mystic personality such as originality, honesty, humility, sacrifice, self-effacement and compassion. He is, in fact, a hero at all points; a hero, first and last.[10] He is a mystic genius in his own right.

His advent to the sphere of the phenomenal world, (the Vedantic world of 'name and form') was certainly like a sudden revelation or a prodigious transfiguration. In the luminous words of Carlyle:

> "Innumerable men had passed by across the universe, with a dumb vague wonder, such as the very animals may feel; or with a painful fruitlessly inquiring wonder, such as men only feel; -- till the great

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9. Younghusband, op.cit., pp.265-66.

10. Cf. Carlyle, op.cit., p.37: "A Hero is a Hero at all points" G.C.Narang calls Guru Nanak a popular hero" Transformation of Sikhism, p.43.

thinker came, the original man, the Seer; whose shaped spoken Thought awakes the slumbering capability of all into Thought. It is ever the way with the Thinker, the spiritual Hero. What he says, all men were not far from saying, were longing to say. The Thoughts of all start up, as from painful enchanted sleep, round his Thought; answering to it, Yes, even so! Joyful to men as the dawning of day from night; -- is it not, indeed, the awakening for them from non-being into being, from death into life? We still honour such a man; call him Poet, Genius, and so forth ... " 11

The poet, the genius -- these are the epithets which fully signify and symbolize Guru Nanak's mystic person.

Radhakrishnan, speaking of the mystical inwardness of religion, remarks: "Religion does not consist to much in prayers and rites as in those silent hours of self-communion which will help us to control our character and build up our personality. By it we cleanse our thoughts, purify our emotions and let the seed of spirit grow."[12] Again: "Religion is not only life-transcending, but also life-transforming. True worship is in the service of suffering humanity."[13]

It is this inward, mystical element i.e., "the inner processes," according to R.T. Jones, "by which one reaches new interior levels of being and liberates in inmost depths of the soul, currents of influences which connect directly with the environing life of God."[14] -- which is the sine qua non of Guru Nanak's Unique personality. In the sphere of religion as well as history, Guru Nanak has been described by various names and epithets such as 'Perfect Man', 'Fakir; 'Baba',

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11. Carlyle, op.cit.,p.28.
12. East and West in Religion, pp.96 f.
13. Ibid., p.69.
14. New Studies in Mystical Religion pp.195-99, quoted in Mohan Singh Dewana, History of Panjabi Literature, p.38.

'Sat-Guru', 'Sant', 'Gurmukh', 'Wali', 'Prophet','God-Man', 'Avtar','Saccha Padshah','Nanak Shah' and so on.[15] All these epithets connote or imply a mystical meaning.

There is no denying whatsoever the exalted religious position of Guru Nanak and his being a divine personage or a mystic of the highest merit known to world history, but there remains the paramount necessity of probing and assessing his exact mystical merit or tour de force.

GURU NANAK'S MYSTIC PERSONALITY

We may, however, consider, in the first instance, that Guru Nanak as a mystic implies a person[16] or a personality.[17]

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15. For 'Perfect Man' Cf. Mohammad Iqbal, Bang-i-Dira (urdu), poem 'Nanak' in which he calls Guru Nanak 'Mard-i-Kamil' i.e. perfect Man (God-man); 'Fakir' etymologically means 'Kuranic' or 'mystical' (Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd ed. 1960, Vol.II and MK,605) and this term has been popularly used with the name of Guru Nanak as in thefollowing syllogism: "Nanak Shah Fakir; Hindu Ka Guru, Mussalman ka pir." Cf. Gurmit Singh Versatile Guru Nanak, p.111 and SSWS,23; the term 'Baba' which literally means 'father' or 'grandfather'(from Persian and Turkish roots, vide Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd ed.1960, Vol.I) has been frequently used by Bhai Gurdas in his first var to denote and eulogize Guru Nanak as a venerable person and this epithet also occurs in the Adi Granth in reference to Guru Nanak, and also in Dabistan pp.224,225,232;and MK,639; the term 'Gurmukh',as synonymous of Guru,has also been used to denote Guru Nanak, Cf.Bhai Gurdas, Var 1,27; the word 'Sant'has often been used in the Adi Granth as synonymous of the Guru; for the epithets God-man, Wali,Prophet, Avatar, Sat-guru see infra; the term 'Sacheha-padshah' has been typically applied to the tenth Guru (Gobind Singh) but is also now used for Guru Nanak, in fact, for all the Sikh Gurus. Guru Nanak was also called 'Nanak Shah'implying an exalted religions-temporal position. Cf.Teja Singh,Sikhism: Its Ideals and Institutions, p.75.

16. W.H.Mcleod,Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion,Chap.VI (The Person),pp.227 ff. Here the writer discusses the individual activities and the personal traits of Guru Nanak's Character.

17. Cf.Inge:"Personality is a teleological fact; it is here in the making,elsewhere in fact and power". Outspoken Essays,p.275. Cf.also "Personality,we are constantly being assured,is the highest form of reality with which we are acquainted." Aldous Huxley,Perennial philosophy,p.45. Huxley here distinguishes the word 'personality'from its inappropriate equivalent selfness;which latter,having association with the idea of self (i.e.baser self),it thus utterly unsuitable for use.

Whereas in Hinduism the common word for a mystic is a Sadhu or a Yogi and is Islam (or Sufism) a Dervesh or a Sufi, in Sikhism the current word for a mystic is the Sant (the 'saint' of christianity) or the Guru. The Sant (and for that matter, the Guru) is an enlightened being, in fact, an Enlightener or a Preceptor -- a person who has himself attained perfection and can make others perfect.[18]

Aldous Huxley provides a remarkable definition of a saint:

> "The saint is one who knows that every moment of our human life is a moment of crisis; for at every moment we are called upon to make an all-important decision to choose between the way that leads to death and spiritual darkness and the way that leads towards light and life; between interests exclusively temporal and the eternal order; between our personal will, or the will of some projection of our personality and the will of God." 19

Similarly, the word 'Guru' connotes (besides its ideational equivalance with God Himself)[20] the 'sabad', or the 'word'. Guru Nanak himself in reply to a question put by Siddhas on the Sumer Parbat as to who was his Guru, said:

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18. For discussion of the real nature of 'Guru's personality as a Perfect Being, see the writer's treatise in Panjabi, "Dasam Guru: Jiwan te Shakhsiat (The Life and Personality of the Tenth Guru) pp.82-85. Cf. also Gurbachan Singh Talib, Guru Nanak: His Personality and Vision, Introduction, XXIX f. and pp. 141. ff.; Jodh Singh, Gurmat Nirnai (in Panjabi), 9th ed. n.d., pp.106 ff.; and infra, Chap. V & VI.

19. Op.cit., p.53. Cf. MK, 182. and Taran Singh, art. "Anand Ghan' Gur Sandesh, ed. Narinder Singh Soch, Feb., 1973, p.21.

20. See Infra, Chap.VI.; Cf. Jodh Singh, op.cit., pp.113 f. Jodh Singh here uses this aspect of 'Guru's concept as being 'one with God' in a somewhat Hindu sense of 'avatar'.

"Sabad is the Guru and the continuity of attention is the disciple."[21]

For Guru Nanak, however, there is also a third meaning of the word 'Guru', as suggested by Mcleod, who says:

> "For Guru Nanak the Guru or Satguru represented the inner voice, the mystical movement of God in the depths of the individual being, the light of God shed abroad in the inmost recesses of the human soul. The Guru remains the vital link, the essential mediator of divine truth, but no longer a human link." 22

Teja Singh offers a simple definition of the 'Guru' by saying that the Guru is a particular personality, a creative and perfect personality who stands as guide and exemplar.[23]

It is almost something new, and possibly original, to discuss Guru Nanak as a mystic, because writers on Guru Nanak, Sikh and non-Sikh, foreign and Indian, with the notable exception of W.H.Mcleod, have simply ignored or, at the most, scantily noticed this important fact about the great Guru. The old Sikh writers beginning with Bhai Gurdas[24] and the obscure Janam-Sakhi authors[25] could not have any clear understanding or conception of what we call 'mystic' or 'mysticism' (terms which we have borrowed and gleaned from the study of western religious Literature, in their clear-cut

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21. Siddh Gosht, 43, AG, 942.

22. Op.cit.,p.197. Cf.J.S.Grewal, Guru Nanak in History,p.240.

23. Sikhism: Its Ideals and Institutions, pp.17-18. Cf.S.S.Kohli Philosophy of Guru Nanak (Chap.'Mysticism of Guru Nanak') pp.63-65. See also MK, 311-314.

24. Vars (39 in number: Var being a specimen and variant of heroic poetry),written during the spiritual reign of Guru Arjan, the fifth Guru.

25. The Janam-Sakhi tradition includes many variations and recensions but three of them are more prominent viz.Puratan Janam Sakhi, Bala Janam Sakhi and Meharban Janam Sakhi.

connotations, only with theadvent of the present century), though they have in their own inimitable way (and poetic manner) implied in their narrations and exegeses, indigenous meanings of a mystical nature, while describing the esoteric experiences and dramatic deeds of the Master.

The foreign writers like Malcolm[26], Cunningham[27] and Macauliffe,[28] though full of insight and dedication to the end they pursued, confined themselves to a general historical survey and narration of the Sikh Movement, from Guru Nanak upto the end of the Sikh rule, and naturally, could not undertake intensive and original study of Guru Nanak's life and works. Hence their study remained mostly objective and intellectual to the exclusion of any deeper ventures into the uncanny world of mystical meaning and reality.[29]

Some Indian writers, Sikh and non-Sikh,[30] in the

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26. Sketch of the Sikhs, 1812.

27. History of the Sikhs, 1849.

28. Sikh Religion, 6 Vols., 1909.

29. J.C.Oman, Mystics, Ascetics and Saints of India, F.Younghusband Modern Mystics and J.N.Farquhar, Modern Religious Movements in India, have made useful studies in Indian religion but mostly about Hinduism and very little about Sikhism.

30. More remarkable among these being G.C.Narang, Transformation of Sikhism, Puran Singh, Spirit Born People, Teja Singh, Essays in Sikhism, Tara Chand, Influence of Islam on Indian Culture (Chap.Guru Nanak), I. Bannerjee, Evolution of the Khalsa, Sher Singh, Philosophy of Sikhism, Duncan Greenlees, Gospel of Guru-Granth Sahib, G.S.Talib, Guru Nanak: Personality and Vision, Pritam Singh, Doctrine of Guru Nanak, S.S.Kohli, Philosophy of Guru Nanak, J.S.Grewal, Guru Nanak in History and Gopal Singh, Religion of the Sikhs. In Panjabi, Bhai Vir Singh, (Baba Naudh Singh, Guru Nanak Chamatkar, Guru Kalgidhar Chamatkar, Asht Guru Chamatkar, Rana Surat Singh) Bhai Jodh Singh (Gurmat Nirnai, Sikhi Ki Hai) and Balbir Singh (Kalam di Karamat, Lammi Nadar, Shudh Sarup) have evinced in their works cited above, much religious and mystical insight while explaining the inner meaning of Gurbani or Sikhism as a whole.

recent times have made deeper sallies into the undiscovered aspects of Sikh theology and the scriptures, but somehow this specialized and advanced branch of religious study (i.e. mysticism) has been largely left in abeyance, probably with the necessary feeling of its time not being ripe yet.

Mcleod, who has a very revealing chapter, 'The Teachings of Guru Nanak' in his recent study of Guru Nanak,[31] says: "In his own way Guru Nanak was also a mystic and, as with Kabir, the climax of his thought is to be found in an effable union with God, the Formless One."[32] Writing about the awakening of spiritual perception in man, this learned writer says: "The prerequisite perception is awakened in man by the Guru, by the Voice of God mystically uttered within."[33]

This is certainly a new language and a new way of treatment of the Sikh thought so far attempted To give one more example of this masterly study and treatment of a recondite subject: "The basis of Guru Nanak's thought is best understood if approached as the thought of one who was essentially a mystic. 'Duality' is to be destroyed, but it is to be a swallowing up in mystical union."[34]

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31. Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion, 1968.

32. Ibid., p.150. Cf. Tara Chand: "He (Guru Nanak) was a mystic in the sense that he had a lively realization of the presence of God ..." (Influence of Islam on Indian Culture,) p.169. Cf.also Duncan Greenlees, Gospal of Guru-Granth Sahib, p.CLXXIII. "But he taught what he had received from 'God' through direct experience of the truth."

33. Mcleod, Loc. Cit.

34. Ibid., p.165.

Guru Nanak's essentially mystic personality had many facets and manifestations, making up a total effect. Personality is nothing if not a totality.[35]

He was a poet and a man of letters, in fact, a pioneer and seminal litteratteur; he was a social reformer, a householder, a responsible citizen, and an ethical thinker; he was a divine preceptor and a redeemer of lost souls; and above all else, he was a mystic, par excellence,[36] one eternally united with the Eternal Lord -- a unique man of genius, simultaneously operative on many a plane of human and super-human activity.

TWO RELEVANT SOURCES, GURBANI AND HISTORY.

There are only two available sources from which we can gather material and facts in order to determine the more or less indeterminable personality of Guru Nanak, which is at once historical as well as trans-historical. The first and most authentic source is his own poetry, called Gurbani and the second is the current historical or semi-historical accounts of his life. Whereas the first source is scanty and indirect, the second is tantative and often conjectural.

In fact, if we may try to construct or envisage a more or less definitive personality out of a jumble and amalgam of mostly unsifted and comfabulated 'facts' of his life (which Mcleod calls 'generally unreliable')[37] it would be a futile task.

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35. For this aspect of the concept of Personality, see Radhakrishnan, Recovery of Faith, p.101.

36. Cf. Dewan Singh, Guru Nanak's Message in Japji, pp.15,75 and 90 f.

37. "Our sources for the life of Guru Nanak are generally unreliable". Mcleod, op.cit.,p.5.

Hence it is imperative to make a combined study of the 'historical Nanak' and the 'Nanak of Legend and faith'.[38]

It may, however, be pointed out that whereas the historical Nanak is a matter of historical research, which is a continuous process, and the Nanak of Legend is mostly based on superstition, hearsay, conjecture and myth, we are here in this present study concerned chiefly with the Nanak of faith or the Nanak of religion. Religious study has its own norms and principles, just as history and ethics have their own preserves. It is, therefore, very essential to regard Guru Nanak as basically a religious figure and (for that matter) a mystic personality, though history and ethics can certainly aid in their determinative aspect. Hence the paramount necessity of relying upon the religious scriptures composed by Guru Nanak and his descendent Gurus.

Distinguishing between religious teachers who speak 'from within', and those who speak 'from without', Emerson calls representative of the first type as one who is "a fervent mystic, prophesying half-insane under the infinitude of his thought."[39]

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38. Cf. Ibid. p.6. Mcleod has tried to pinpoint what he calls 'historical Nanak' by rejecting the merely conjectural or imaginative parts of the earlier narratives of Guru Nanak's life, called 'Janam Sakhis' and other historical sources. He has then briefly stated the most residual biographical facts after much sifting and discussion. Ibid. pp.146 f. He has also tried to present the 'Nanak of faith' (not of legend, of course) by intelligently studying his religious teachings. Ibid. pp.148-226. It was, however, not his aim to discuss Guru Nanak purely as a mystic. Cf.also J.C.Archer, The Sikhs, p.57 (quoted in J.S.Grewal, Guru Nanak in History, p.287), He distinguishes Guru Nanak as 'the factual' and 'the formless', which exactly corresponds to Mcleod's analysis.

39. The essay: 'Over-Soul', Essays, p.170.

GURU NANAK AND REVELATION

Utmost honesty and sincerity, highest purity and simplicity, rare dedication and devotion to the service of God and His creation, unbounded love and compassion, exuberant enthusiasm and fervour (even frenzy), unsparing selflessness and disdain (or withdrawal from all that is non-God), extreme humility and abandon and, above all, an immediate,transcendental feeling of divine awareness and nearness, are the distinguishing features of a mystic personality.[40] Guru Nanak, it can be averred, possessed all these human-superhuman traits in right fullness and abundance. But this mystical apotheosis was not self-acquired; it came as a gift from above.

Guru Nanak as a mystic may be said to have acquired divine Grace in the form of a fortuitious Revelation[41] and

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40. Cf. Emerson: "The sublime vision comes to the pure and simple in a clean and chaste body." Again: "A certain tendency to insanity has always attended the opening of the religious sense as if they (the mystics) had been 'blasted with excess of light'. "Everywhere the history of religion betrays a tendency to enthusiasm. "Ibid.,pp. 167-170. For suffering, sacrifice and love, Cf. Radhakrishnan East and West in Religion, pp.109-111, 118-122. For sincerity, see supra (Carlyle's quotation) and for emotion and fervour see Younghusband, Modern Mystics, p.7. (Introduction).

41. Revelation, says Emerson, "is an influx of the Divine mind into our mind." Again: "A thrill passes through all men at the reception of new truth or at the performance of a great action which comes out of the heart of nature." "Revelation is the disclosure of the soul." op.cit.pp.167 f. Cf. Bhai Gurdas: "First he (Guru Nanak) received divine grace, then he made austere penances." Var I, 24.(Pahlon Babe paia bakhash dar pichhon de phir ghal kamai).

a divine Dispensation or Sanction.[42] His role in the world as a prophetic saviour was certainly a pre-destined, eternally-ordained reality. He is human as well as divine at the same time. A marvellous divine unicity or 'unification', he had attained in his life on earth.

As regards predestination vis-a-vis freedom of will the following statements may be noteworthy: "Man is subject to predestination because he is not God, but he is free because he is 'made in the image of God."[43]

And the following revealing excerpt about divine union: "Ineffable is the union of man and God in every act of the soul. The simplest person who in his integrity worships God, becomes God; yet for ever and ever the influx of this better and universal self is new and unsearchable, It inspires awe and astonishment."[44]

Similarly, about revelation we have the authority of Max Muller: "I hold that there is nowhere any belief in God except as the result of a divine revelation, the effect of a divine spirit working in man."[45]

Guru Nanak had certainly this 'divine spirit' working in him, in the highest degree. His word is to be believed, his evidence and authority to be accepted as something oracular and

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42. For Guru Nanak's 'Divine dispensation' see Infra. The Guru declared his divine mission by uttering mystical words:" "There is no Hindu and no mussalman."

43. Schuon, Understanding Islam, trans. D.M.Matheson, p.14.

44. Emerson, op.cit., p.173 Cf. also stace, Mysticism and Philosophy, p.94.

45. Life and Letters of Feredrick Max Muller, Vol.II, p.464, quoted in Radhakrishnan, East and West in Religion, p.27.

irrefutable, because it comes directly from the source of truth and reality. The Guru is at his greatest when he says that he knows not what to say, as if he is a mere amanuensis or agent who gives out what is dictated to him by the Supreme Being. He knows only what is given him to know and says only what is given him to say. His knowing and saying are certainly direct and revealed. In the words of Lord Buddha:

> "Only when he knows does he say that he knows, only when he has seen does he say that he has seen." 46

Such supreme authority, in the history of world religion, vests only in the greatest mystics like Guru Nanak, of whom we can say with Iole who answering the question 'how did he know that Hercules was a God?' said: "He (Hercules) conquered whether he stood, or walked, or sat, or whatever thing he did."[47]

Complete trust in God i.e. total identification (or what we earlier called 'divine unicity') is the hall-mark of a mystic. Emerson says in his essay called "Circles": "A man, said Oliver Cromwell, never rises so high as when he knows not whither he is going".[48] All this is largely true of the divine person of Guru Nanak.

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46. G.F.Allen, Buddha's Words of Wisdom, (compiled), 'Anupada Sutta, p.58. Cf. Guru Nanak, Tilang, AG.722. "As the word of the Lord descendeth upon me. So I make it known friend Lallo." SSWS, 96. (Jaisi mai avai khasam ki bani taisara kari gian ve Lalo).

47. Emerson, Essays (essay: 'Character'), p.280.

48. Ibid., p.190.

GURU NANAK ABOUT HIMSELF

Let us now examine and assess his real character on him own authority, for the best authority on Guru Nanak is himself, in his own spoken word. All else is second hand or just in support of what he said. The external evidence is just corroborative of the internal one.

Guru Nanak calls himself (i) a bard (dhadi)[49] (ii) a poet (Sair),[50] (iii) A mad man of God (dewana sah ka, bawrana)[51] (iv) a slave (lala),[52] (v) a dervesh or fakir, rather 'the dust of the feet of thine servants' (tere chakran pakhak),[53] (vi) the love-infatuated one, 'the mad dog of His court', (Sag Nanak deban mastana)[54], (vii) the trumpeter of God or truth (tabalbai

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49. Var Majh, 27, AG, 149. "I am the useless bard, God put me to work." (Hau dhadi vekar kare laiya').

50. Patti Asa, 35, AG. 434. "Whatever he does only he knows, thus has Nanak the poet expressed." (Kare Karai Sabh Kich ape Nanak sair iv kahiya).

51. Maru Chaupade, AG, 991. "Somebody calls me a ghost, another a demon. While another calls me a man. I am but the humble one. Nanak became mad in love of God and lost all wit. I know none else but God." (Koi akhai bhutana ko kahai betala, koi akhai adami Nanak vechara, Bhava dewana sah ka Nanak bawrana. Hau har bin avar na jana). Cf. Plato regards "this divine madness" as "the source of the chiefest blessings granted to man." IPH. Vol.1, 368.

52. Maru, AG. 1011. "The slave belongs to the Lord-all praise be to Him." (Lala gola khasam ka khasamai wadiyai). Cf.also Maru, Solhe, AG. 1026, (Nanak tis ka lala gola) Nanak is his humble slave...."

53. Tilang, AG, 698. "Nanak thine servant says this, he is the dust of the feet of thine servants." (Nanak bugoyd jan tura tere chakaran pakhak.)

54. Var Malar, Slok, AG, 1291. "The mad dog of His court who is ever in ascending spirit." (Sag Nanak diban mastana nitt Charai sawaia).

i.e. nagarchi)[55] (viii) a he-slave (das), a she-slave (dasi)[56] (ix) the ignorant fool (mur__)[57] (x) the humblest slave (dasan-das)[58] (xi), the helpless, the humble (garib, vechara, andhla nich jat pardesi, hino-nich)[59] and so on.

All these self-applied appelations of Guru Nanak denote his extreme sense of humility and complete absorption in God. He lauded humility (and sweetness) as the quintessential basis of all the ethical virtues know to man:

> "Sweetness and humility, O Nanak, are the essence of all virtues and good actions." 60

Humility wins great merit in this world and the next. It pleases all men as nothing else does. The mystic when he bows so low, by so doing attains the highest merit in the eyes of the Creator of all virtues. Guru Nanak says: "when we weigh in the scale (of values) the one who bows is the weighty man."[61]

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55. Var Majh, AG. 142. "The (divine) trumpeter proclaimed his thoughtful word." (Tabalbaj bichar sabad sunaiya). Cf. J.S. Grewal, Guru Nanak in History, p. 282. He has used the word 'herald' to denote 'tabalbaj.'

56. Suhi, AG. 729. "We are the maid-servants of the Lord who is our true beloved." (Ham sah kerian dasiyan sacha khasam hamara)'

57. Suhi, AG. 731. "In such (low) company Nanak lives, how can the ignorant fool find God." (Taki Sangat Nanak Rehanda kio kar mura pavai).

58. Bilawal, Chaupade, AG.,795, "God showed kindness to His humblest slave." (Har kirpa dhari dasan-das).

59. Basant, Chaupade dutke, AG.,1168. "What can the humble Nanak do?" (Nanak Vechara kia Kare), Suhi, AG., 731. "The blind and low-caste stranger comes and goes in a moment. (Andhla nich jat pardesi khin awai til jawai). Suhi Chhant, AG.,767 "I, the poor wretch humbly supplicate that I may never shun truth, O brother." (Hino nich karau benanti sach na chhadau bhai). Cf. also Siri, AG. 23.

60. Var Asa, Slok AG. 470 (Mithhat nivi Nanka gun changaivan tat).

61. Loc.cit. (Dhar taraju toliyai nivai so gaura hoi). Cf. also Jesus, quoted in Radhakrishnan, East and West in Religion, p. 107. Viz. "The meek shall inherit the earth." "I shall exalt him that is low and abase him that is high." Cf. Further, Guru Nanak's lines. "He (God) may exalt a worm (a lowly person) to kingship and raze to ashes a great army." (Kira thap dei patshahi laskar kare suah). Var Majh, slok, AG.,144.

Absolute denial of self or complete self-abnegation is always the aim of the all-giving and all-gaining mystic. Thus Guru Nanak makes the piousest wish:

> "He who will bring me a message from you, my lord,
> what should I give him?
>
> I shall cut off my head and make a seat for him
> to sit on, and be in attendance on him.
>
> Why not die and be a sacrifice, when the Lord has
> forsaken me?" 62

FOUR MAIN ASPECTS OF GURU NANAK'S PERSON.

Guru Nanak as a mystic encompasses all conceivable human areas relevant to spiritual activity[63] at the highest mystical level, chief among which may be discussed as under:

1. As a Perfect-Man: Al Insan'l-Kamil[64] or God-Man,[65]

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62. Wadhans, AG. 557-558. Cf. SSWS, 94. (Tai Sahib ki bat ji akhai kauh Nanak kia dijai, Sis wadhe kar baisan dijai vin sir sev karijai. Kiona marije jiara na dijai ja sauh bhaia vidana.).

63. Cf. Younghusband, Modern Mystics, p.261. "Hence the devoted activity of the great mystics. They have loved their fellow men - they have loved the whole world-with a tenderness and a depth unknown to ordinary men. And that is why for long years and centuries afterwards they have been loved by mankind to a point of adoration such as man gives to no others of his heroes."

64. The well known Sufi term coined and used by Ibn al-Arabi and Al-Jili. Cf. R.A. Nicholson, Studies in Islamic Mysticism, Chap. II (The Perfect Man), p.77.

65. "By God-men we mean persons like Gautama the Buddha, Jesus, the Christ", "Man perfected acquires the divine status." Radhakrishanana. Recovery of Faith, pp.163 f.

Nicholson defining Perfect Man says: "We may describe the Perfect Man as a man who has fully realized his essential oneness with the Divine Being in whose likeness he is made."[66] In Sufistic (or Islamic) terminology, the Perfect-Man is called Wali (the plural form awliya is also sometimes used in singular sense, to denote a wali, as in the case of the well-known Sufi saint of Delhi, Shaikh Nizamud-din-awliya.) A wali is a Muslim saint, next in spiritual heirarchy to the Prophet or the Rasul.[67]

"The class of Perfect Men", says Nicholson, "comprises not only the prophets from Adam to Mohammed but also the superlatively elect (Khusus'l-Khusus) among the Sufis, i.e. the persons named collectively Awliya ... Since the wali or saint is the popular type of Perfect Man, it should be understood that the essence of Mohammedan saintship, as of prophesy, is nothing less than divine illumination, immediate vision and knowledge of things unseen and unknown, when the veil of self is suddenly lifted and the conscious self passes away in the overwhelming glory of the one true light."[68]

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66. Nicholson, op.cit.,p.78.

67. The literal meaning of Wali is 'near', also used for a 'friend''protege' or 'devotee'. Loc.cit. In actual meaning: "An ecstatic feeling of oneness with God constitutes the Wali," Loc.cit. Cf. MK,813.

68. Nicholson, loc. op.cit.,Guru Nanak easily falls into line with both the categories of the Prophet and the Wali. His position as a wali (i.e. Saint) is generally accepted in religious literature but recently he has also been called a prophet. Darshan Singh says that "from the religious point of view, Guru Nanak is the prophet of the Sikhs." Religion of Guru Nanak, p.27. Cf. Trilochan Singh, Guru Nanak: A Revolutionary Prophet, p.4 and Tara Chand, Influence of Islam on Indian Culture, p. 168.

Two special functions of the wali may be determined:

(i) His functions as a mediator.

(ii) His function as a cosmic power.[69]

Al-Jili says: "God and man become one in the Perfect Man." He says further that the "Perfect Man passes through three phases of mystical illumination or revelation (tajjali) which run parallel to three stages: Oneness, He-ness, and I-ness.[70]

The same author, Al-Jili, calls the Perfect man the preserver of theuniverse i.e., the Qutb or the Pole on which all the spheres of existence revolve.[71] He has used the metaphor of 'water' to illustrate the process of Divine element or essence (i.e. water) becoming crystallized to form the prophet or the Wali (i.e. the ice) and again turning into essence, pure and simple.[72]

Guru Nanak, who combined in his mystic person the Divine and human elements in the highest degree and thus may be most appropriately called the Perfect Man or God-man, expressed this paradoxical idea of the 'uniplex divine entity' (i.e. God-man) in his mystical poetry, when he said:

(i) "Guru is the ladder, Guru is the boat, Guru is the raft, indicative of God's Name. Guru is the ship in the ocean (of the world), Guru is the river

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69. Nicholson, op.cit., p.75.

70. Ibid., p.84.

71. Ibid., p.86.

72. Ibid., p.84 Hallaj, however, says that the essence of God's essence is love which implies that God creates universe as an expression of love and again absorbs the creation into His essence which is again love. Ibid., p.80.

of pilgrimage."[73]

(ii) "Those who invested in Truth, the perfect Guru blessed them."[74]

(iii) "If the perfect Guru meets us we acquire diamonds of thought."[75]

(iv) "Guru is the giver, Guru is the home of peace, Guru is the light in the three worlds."[76]

(v) "The commodity is only at one shop; it is procured through the perfect Guru."[77]

(vi) "Countless times a day, hail unto the Guru, all hail! Whose transmitting spirit has changed mortals into God-like saints."[78]

(vii) "The ocean called Guru is full of diamonds. Saints who are near him, gather the elixir."[79]

Guru, thus, is another word for the Perfect Man or the God-man. Guru Nanak has his original version or coinage

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73. Siri, AG. 17 (Gur pauri beri Guru Gur tulha har nau. Gur sar sagar boetho gur tirath dariyao). Cf. MK. 314.

74. Siri, AG. 18 (Jini sach vanajia Gur Pura sabas).

75. Siri, AG, 59 (Satgur pura je milai paiyai ratan bichar). Cf. also Japji, 6; AG, 2. "If one listens to the instructions of the Guru, the reason becomes adored with gems and rubies and diamonds." (Mat vich ratan jawahar manak ji ik gur ki sikh suni).

76. Var Majh, Slok AG, 138. (Gur data Guru hive ghar Gur dipak tih loe).

77. Var Majh, AG. 146 (Sauda ikat hat pure Gur paiyai).

78. Var Asa, Slok, AG. 463. Cf. SSWS, p.91 (Balihari Gur apne deohari sad var, Jin manas te devte kie karat na lagi var).

79. Dhanasari, Astpadiyan, AG.685 (Gur Sagar Ratanibharpure. Amrit sant chugeh nahi dure).

for this 'Uniplex' viz. "Gur-kartar" (i.e. Guru-God), "Gur-Gobind" "Har-Gur", and "Gur-Parmesar".[80] Guru Nanak accepted no human Guru and regarded God as his Guru or considered Guru as the holy word (sabad) or Logos i.e. the divine principle working on the human level.[81] Guru Nanak himself as Guru is just the holy word (Sabad)[82] and so were his nine Guru-descendents. Ultimately the Gurbani or Sabad, as revealed in the Guru Granth (often called Adi Granth,) was named the final, eternal Guru by the last human (or Sargun) Guru (i.e. Guru Gobind Singh). So Gurushin does not lie in any human body or human factor whatsoever; it is absolutely the logos (the Word) working, for a certain given period, on human level for the benefit of humanity. We shall discuss this point further while dealing with the mystic meaning of the term Guru in the sixth Chapter.

2. As a Miracle-working Saint. Every mystic spontaneously possesses occult or supernatural (mystic) powers. The suprasensual faculty, without which no mystic is recognised as such, is the result of his inward concentration and complete

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80. Cf. AG. 59, 61 (Siri), for "Gur-Kartar"; Maru, Solhe AG, 1043, for "Har-Gur". Cf. also Mohan Singh Dewana, Sikh Mysticism, p.24, for "Gur-gobind" and "Gur-parmesar." See also Bhai Gurdas, Var 1,17. "Gur Parmesar is one ..."

81. Cf. Marquette, Introduction to comparative mysticism, p.113. "God is transcendent but works in and on the universe by the intermediary of the Logos..."

82. See Supra, pp. 145-46.

and constant absorption in the Divine Being.[83] This is almost his birth right or his innate quality.

That Guru Nanak possessed such supernatural power, is undoubted, as some of the facts of his life clearly reveal e.g. his reading the secret thoughts of Naweb Daulat Khan Lodi and his Qazi at Sultanpur Lodi while they were outwordly praying in congregation (i.e.reciting Namaz); his fearless confrontation with and conversion of the demonic cannibal named Kauda, and the mystical conversion of the vily thag named Sajjan, and the sorceress called Nur shah of Assam; his prescience about the great spiritual destiny of his successor-to-be named Lehna (later known as Guru Angad) to whom he relegated and transmitted all his spiritual powers by prostrating before him at the time of his passing away from the world; and so on. We shall speak more of these extraordinary events of the Guru's life towards the closing part of this chapter.

These supernatural powers[84] are invariably accompanied by an abnormal, psychic disturbance of the mystic's mental

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83. "Their title to saintship depends upon a peculiarly intimate relation to God, which is attested by gifts of ecstasy and above all, by thaumaturgic gifts (Karamat-grazie)." R.A. Nicholson, op.cit.,p.65. Grazie is a Greek word for miracle.

84. R. Mukerjee, Theory and Art of Mysticism, pp. 202,F. He includes among these 'transcendent powers of Mystics', premonition, precognition, telepathy or clairvoyance; a vision or a dream or a strange music or rythm etc. Cf. also Dean Inge: "Visions, locutions, auditions, and so forth are accepted as miraculous fact." Mysticism in Religion, p.28.

and cognitive faculties rendering him almost senseless, insane and mad in the worldly sense;[85] whilе actually speaking he is a hyper-sensuous and intensely passionate and enthusiastic person in his loving desire for the divine union. It is the intuitional 'faith' in the loving and saving grace of the Divine Beloved that leads the mystic to acquiring gifts of these inner-powers called miracles. Goethe rightly says: "Miracle is faith's dearest child."[86]

Guru Nanak, however, characteristically rejected the association of miracle-working to his name and personality because he regarded all pride in miraculous power as something extraneous to the mystic proper. To him it was utterly futile to possess or to display miracles because it would distract and confuse the true votary of God from loving Him whole-heartedly. It would create a spurious sense of 'otherness' and duplicity in the mind of the mystic -- a sort of easy compensation or reward for certain meritorious spiritual acts; a delimitation of

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85. The great Sufi mystic Abu Said, referring to his severe penances and inner absorption, says: "In all my acts, I was a follower of the prophet. Every four and twenty hours I completed a recitation of the Koran. In my seeing I was blind, in my hearing deaf, in my speaking dumb. For a whole year, I conversed with no one. People called me a lunatic and I allowed them to give me that name, relying on the tradition that a man's faith is not made perfect until he is supposed to be mad." Nicholson, op.cit. p.15. Cf. the Janam-Sakhi accounts of Guru Nanak's lunatic or near-lunatic conditions of aloofeness, silence, melancholy etc. in the early years of his life viz. Puratan Janam Sakhi, ed. Bhai Vir Singh, pp.12-14. Cf. also Younghusband, Modern Mystics, p.6: "And it may be admitted that even the friends of some of these mystics thought them mad."

86. Quoted in Inge, Mysticism in Religion, p.22.

the higher self.[87]

He especially refuted and condemned the idea of display of miracles and in the face of boistrous challenge from the Muslim divines and Mullas as well as Siddh Yogis to prove his spiritual bonafies by showing a miracle, he invariably and persistently desisted from doing so.[88] Instead, he preferred even to be misunderstood as a miracle-working saint, than to yield to the cheap temptation of the so-called Sufi fakirs and Yogis who took pride in such thaumaturgic actions which

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87. Cf. Japji, 29. AG, 6. "The Lord Himself is the Master (Nath), the whole world is under His sway; and the spiritual powers (miracles called Ridhis and Sidhis) are extraneous occupation." Trans. Dewan Singh, Guru Nanak's Message in Japti, p.144. (AP Nath nathi sabh ja ki riddh siddh avara sad). Cf. also Siri, AG, 14. "If I were a Siddh and display my siddhis (miracles) and welcome the ingress of siddhis (occult powers); if I may disappear and appear to public view at my will so that men may revere me; Lord forbid, that I may ever forget the Divine Name." (Siddh hovan siddh lai, riddh akhan ao, gupt pargat hoai baisan lok rakhai bhao. Mat dekh bhula viserai tera chit na avai nao. Cf. SSWS, p.65. Cf. also Strauss (Life of Jesus, ii,237) purporting that christ censured the seeking for miracles (John iv, 48), quoted in Cunningham, History of the Sikhs, (ed.1955) p.40 n. Also see Carlyle, Heroes and Hero-worship (The Hero as Prophet') p.91: "Mahomet can work no miracles; he often answers impatiently: I can work no miracles."

88. Varan Bhai Gurdas, Var 1, 43. "There is no other miracle in me except the True Name." (Baihon sache nam de hor karmat asathe nahi). The context is the dialogue with Yogis at Achal Vatala where Guru Nanak went and defeated by superior argument the yogis' efforts to over-awe him by display of miracles. This happened in the last years of Guru Nanak's life during shivratri fair: (Sahib Singh places this incident in March, 1530. Cf. his Life of Guru Nanak (Panjabi),p.234.

certainly made them vain, awe-inspiring and formidable spiritualists, but also at the same time, useless and antinomian individuals. Guru Nanak showed a superior spiritual mettle and calibre when he admonished them at their vain chicaneries and sophistrics and advised them to care only for the love of God and devotion to His service and the service of mankind.

To quote a great Sufi on the futility of miracles: Sheikh Abdulah Ansar of Herat used to tell his pupils: "To fly in the air is no miracle for the dirtiest flies can do it; to cross rivers without bridge or boat is no miracle, for a terrier can do the same; but to help suffering hearts is a miracle performed by holy men."[89]

There is, in fact, true mysticism and false mysticism. Similarly there are true mystics and false ones, just as there have been genuine prophet and the fake ones. Guru Nanak also distinguishes between the true Guru (Sacha Guru) and the false Guru (Kacha Guru).[90]

Thus, it may be pointed out with a fair sense of certitude and veracity that the many Janam Sakhi accounts (specially in the Bala-Janam Sakhi) describing the Guru's apparently 'supposed miracles' such as flying in the air while travelling or walking on water in the ocean to cross it

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89. Quoted in Radhakrishnan, East and West in Religion, pp.52 f.

90. Cf. Var Majh, Slok AG, 140. "Nanak, if a blind man guides others, he will drown all his company. Such a guide will be exposed in the next world and smitten on the face." (Nanak andha hoe kai dase rahai, sabhas muhai sathai. Agai gaya muhe muh pahe su aisa agu japai).

or his face-to-face anthropomorphic talk with the Divine Being after ascent to the highest heaven, or his meeting the legendery Kalyug, or his halting the fall of a mountain by the support of his hand, or his travels to the place called 'the abode of ants' (Kir-nagar), so on and so forth, can hardly be accepted as true.[91]

3. As a social and Ethical Thinker. Guru Nanak was no recluse. Though a mystic, he was, withal, a social and ethical thinker. He never gave any quarter to the run-aways from life. The antinomian, unsocial, misogynist Yogis and Sufis were anethema to him and caused extreme aversion to his mind. He was never tired of criticizing and condemning them. The aggressive but ignorant Mullah and the vain, loquacious Pandit were equally unacceptable; similarly the ascetics, the ritualists, the hypocrites, the pharisees, the blood-suckers of humanity, the corrupt officials, the overbearing and cruel rulers, in fact, all anti-social elements abhored him. His poetic sermons are replete with trenchant jibes and digs on

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91. For a very searching and detailed study of this aspect of Guru Nanak's life, see Mcleod, Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion, Chap. III. In his scholastic zeal, however, the learned historian has probably gone too far in questioning the veracity of almost all the events of the Guru's life for want of a "reliable-authentic" evidence. It would be better perhaps to accept those "Sakhis which are compatible with the Guru's spiritual and mystical views as propounded in Gurbani and to reject those which are incompatible with these views of the Guru. Thus, some of the genuine miracles might be retained and certain spurious and fake ones purged. Such sifting would, however, involve great difficulty.

all such socially-unwanted junk.[92]

To Guru Nanak, the true worship of God lay in the service of humanity. He very aptly said: "If we do service in this world, then only can we find place in the next world."[93] Again: "We are good in talk, but poor in character. In our minds we are black and corrupt, but outwardly we are attractive!"[94]

Guru Nanak condemned social injustice and inequity or snatching other's rights and property, in the severest terms. His well-known lines, oft-quoted by writers on his thought, may be repeated: "Another's right (or property) is taboo, as (eating) swine to the Muslim and cow to the Hindu. The Guru or Pir will help only if the man will not eat carrion. We can't enter the heaven by mere talk, salvation comes through righteous action only."[95]

This mundane world is as pure as the higher spiritual world. It is, in fact, a reflection of the true heaven.[96] Guru Angad says: "This world is the house of the True One and the True

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92. Guru Nanak's three Vars, in Majh, Asa and Malar Ragas, are specially rich in social and ethical criticism. The Guru almost tried to clean the Aegian Stable of the Indian Society of his time -- a Herculian task, indeed. Cf. Avtar Singh, Ethics of the Sikhs, p.11. "The Gurus were men of vision and the Adi Granth is full of their ethics-spiritual insights."

93. Siri, AG, 25. (Vich duniyasev kamaiyai. Tan Dargeh baisan paiyai).

94. Slok (with Var Siri M.4) AG, 85. (Gali asi changiya achari buriyah. Mano kasudha kalia bahar chitviyah).

95. Var Majh, Slok AG, 140-141. (Haq paraia Nanka us suar us gai. Gur pir hama ta bhare je murdar na khai. Gali bhist na jaiyai chhutai sach kamae.)

96. "The Universe is the externization of the soul". Emerson, Essays (essay: "The Poet"), p.233.

One lives in it."[97] Guru Nanak says: "The Nights, seasons, lunar positions and days; the air, the water, the fire and the neither region: In this ensemble God placed the temple-like earth."[98]

It has been said: "Faith without works is dead."[99] Guru Nanak has also strongly advocated the need for dynamic activity and strict adherence to duty among all men, including those who profess religion zealously and intensely.[100] Radhakrishnan emphasizing this point, says: "If religion is not dynamic and pervasive, if it does not penetrate every form of human activity, it is only veneer and not a reality."[101] Kant may also be relevently quoted here: "Mystical experience is that part of human experience out of which moral feelings flow."[102]

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97. Var Asa, Slok M.2 AG, 463, (Eh Jag sachai ki hai kothrhi sache ka vich vas.

98. Japji, 34, AG, 7 trans. Dewan Singh, Guru Nanak's Message in Japji, p.149. (Rati ruti thitti var, pavan pani agni patal. This vich dharti thap rakhi dharamsal).

99. James 2:17. Quoted in Radhakrishnan, Recovery of Faith. p.26.

100. Var Sarang, M.4 (Slok) AG, 1238. "The basic thought acceptable to all is this: There will be judgment according to actions, whatever one may say otherwise." (Mul mat parvana eho Nanak akh sunayai. Karni uper hoe tapavas ji ko kahe kahai).

101. Op.cit., p.26.

102. Mystical Theory of Ethics, quoted in Stace, Mysticism and Philosophy, p.323.

Guru Nanak, thus, was predominantly egaliterian and socialistic in his views on society and the world. As a mystic, he combined in himself an inner discipline (of the Divine Name) and an altruistic attitude towards life. In a simple line (so well-known) he combined 'truth' (Sach) with 'true living' (Sach-achar) viz. "Truth is highest but higher still is true living."[103]

4. As a poet. Whereas a heightened sense of truth made Guru Nanak a prophet, a philosopher and an original thinker,[104] and his profound sense of compassion and sorrow at the plight of the suffering humanity,[105] turned him into a saviour and redeemer of souls as well as a relentless, social revolutionary,[106] his exquisite perception of beauty and sense of wonder (vismad) in face of Nature and, in fact, in whatever he saw, quickened his sensebility to the supreme heights of sublime artistic creation.

A special charisma[107] attaches to Guru Nanak as a poet and an artist. He was a poetic genius of the greatest

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103. Siri, AG. 62 (Sachon ore sabh ko uper sach achar), Cf. Avtar Singh, Ethics of the Sikhs, Foreword. "Sikhism is one of the most profoundly moralized faiths, though it does not claim any formal system of ethics." The Sikh morality is actually a type of higher ethics, based on mystical premises and concepts. See infra, Chap.V.

104. The two keywords in Guru Nanak's mystical philosophy are Sach (Truth) and Sachiar (Truthful). Cf. Trilochan Singh, Guru Nanak: A Revolutionary Prophet, pp.4 f.

105. Var Asa, Slok, AG, 469. "Sorrow became a remedy and comfort a disease, so that, where there is comfort, there is no God." (Dukh daru sukh rog bhaya ja sukh tam na hoi).

106. Cf. Trilochan Singh, op.cit., pp.7. f.

107. For discussion of this word coined by Max Weber, see Ibid., p.4.

calibre (he called himself a bard (dhadi) and a poet (Sair) as we noted earlier in this chapter). His fondness, proficiency and knowledge of the intricacies and niceties of music were, indeed, profound. Poetry and music, though always wedded together, came to him as a twice-blessed divine gift.

"He had an artistic conscience," says a modern Sikh writer, "and an ease of invention and suppleness of genius that freed all his creative work from the inevitably crumbling bonds of doctrines and of schools."[108]

Love of music and poetry in Guru Nanak was no conscious effort on his part but a spontaneous overflow of a divinely-inspired, intuitive faculty. Guru Nanak was no ordinary connoisseur of literature. He was a mystic and a prophet who poured forth his divine message in sonorous notes and revealing 'poesy'. "Love, beauty, music and art were for Nanak visible, manifest and perfect handiworks of God."[109]

Though poetry and arts were looked down upon by Plato and Mohammed, among the galaxy of mystics and prophets, yet Guru Nanak, as a true mystic, exalted these as divine gifts and in this respect his affinity and resemblance to the Sufi's excessive love and flare for audition,[110] is too apparent.

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108. Ibid., p.12. Cf. A.C.Banerjee: "There were poets among the bhagats, but Guru Nanak excels them all as a literary artist and as an architect of language." Guru Nanak and His times, p.212.

109. Ibid.,p.1 Cf. Underhill, Essentials of Mysticism, p.65. She regards a mystic to be "a creative artist of the highest kind" whose function, in the words of Blake, is to "Cleanse the doors of perception so that everything may appear as it is -- infinite."

110. Called Sama in Sufi terminology. For its prevalence and indispensability among the Sufis, see Nicholson, Mystics of Islam, pp.59. f., 63 ff. Cf. MK, 769.

After these four main characteristics of personality a brief discussion of certain biographical facts of Guru Nanak's life, having a mystical reference to and a bearing on his charismatic personality, may be useful.

It may be pointed out, before we do so that though a mystic's life is inevitably conditioned and affected by historical facts, well-cherished traditions and the contemporary milieu, yet it is not too much to say that the mystic's real matrix for his being and living is not <u>in fact</u> but <u>beyond fact</u> i.e. beyond the world of time and space, because a mystic ever transcends the immediate and the factual, while outwardly engrossed in it, and lives and finds a permanent home in the Ultimate, and the Eternal.[111] It is, therefore, meet to see the mystic like Guru Nanak in the historical setting as well as the invisible setting of his Eternal Abode.[112] This purely mystical aspect, we propose to probe and discuss in detail in the next two chapters.

<u>GURU NANAK'S HISTORICAL IMAGE.</u>

Guru Nanak's historical biography is not too large or too eventful, for, as Emerson says, "Great geniuses have the shortest biographies."[113] His real, 'unorthodox' <u>biography</u>, comprising the eternal 'facts' and 'events' so indelibly

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111. i.e. in the <u>Karam Khand</u> or <u>Sach Khand</u> (The Regions of Grace and Truth) where the Bhagats, saints and martyrs have their eternal dwelling. <u>Japji</u>, 37.

112. <u>Cf. Sorath</u>, <u>AG</u>. 595: "If you go to the realm of the Formless Lord, you will find bliss in that holy sanctuary."(<u>Nirankar ke des jahe ta sukh lahe mahal</u>).

113. <u>Essays</u> (Essay: 'Plato or the Philosopher'), p.401.

imprinted in the world of 'meaning' and 'poetry' (called Gurbani or Sabad), is, however, unending and unlimited.

Historical facts[114] of the Guru's life may be classified into five phases, as under.

1. Born in the 15th Cen. (1469 A.D.) under conditions of foreign Muslim rule and a general social ethical and religious degradation, between rivers Ravi and Chenab, in a region full of jungles and barren plains with sparse population at a place named Talwandi (now, Nankana Sahib).

2. Passed his early youth among worldly-minded parents and a few adoring souls like his sister Nanaki, Mardana, (a Muslim bard) and Rai Bular, who was a god-fearing potentate. Nanak was, however, inwardly conditioned for a growing mystic-love for God and kept aloof, sad, and thoughtful. Some efforts to normalize his behaviour, such as marriage, work and admonition, failed to wean him from his innate sainthood.

3. A few years' service as a Store Keeper at Sultanpur Lodi proved his lofty moral character. Like Mohammed he was reputed to be utmost honest. His mystical development having fructified, he got prepared in 1507 A.D. for his life mission. His declaration of his 'Dispensation' viz. "There is no Hindu and no Mussalman" is of great mystical importance. His disappearance in the river Veivn for three days has a

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114. For a detailed study of Guru Nanak's biography see Mcleod Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion, Cunningham, History of the Sikhs, Latif, History of the Panjab, Macauliffe, Sikh Religion, Vol. 1, G.C. Narang, Transformation of Sikhism, Kartar Singh, Life of Guru Nanak, Harbans Singh, Guru Nanak and Origins of the Sikh Faith, and Sahib Singh, Life of Guru Nanak (Panjabi).

miraculous mystery hidden behind it. His leaving Nawab Daulat Khan Lodi's service and his recourse to the use of omniscient powers in the presence of the Nawab at once seals him as a mystic saint or fakir. He sets forth on his eternal world-mission, at the age of thirty eight.

4. Travels[115] take him to some foreign countries and to different places all over India. He went not as an ordinary Sadhu, but acted everywhere as a supreme Master. He sowed everlasting seeds of Sikhism wherever he went. As a seminal personality he is unique in history. Travels lasted about 15 years.[116] Probably he met Babur at Saidpur in 1521 A.D. His strong reaction to Babur's cruel massacre of this town's populace finds exquiste expression in his poems collectively called Babarvani.

5. The last phase at Kartarpur on the right bank of Ravi, lasted eighteen years. Now he reaped what he had sown, i.e. exerted great influence on his social milieu, converted thousands to his mission, wrote sublime, revealing poetry, organized his own way of life meant to guide his

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115. For a detailed information of the travels of Guru Nanak, a very recent study may be useful viz. S.S.Kohli, Travels of Guru Nanak. Another comprehensive work is Sahib Singh's Life of Guru Nanak (Panjabi) which describes the Guru's travels in great accuracy and detail.

116. According to Forster (Travels, 1.295) Guru Nanak travelled for fifteen years. Quoted in Cunningham, History of the Sikhs, ed. 1955, p.37 n. Cf. Sahib Singh, art. 'Guru Nanak's Brief Account of Life', Guru Nanak: Life, Philosophy and Poetic Art. (Panjabi), ed. S.S.Kohli, pp.15-26. According to Sahib Singh Guru Nanak's travels lasted for thirteen years (i.e.1507-1521 A.D.excluding two year's stay at Kartarpur after the second Itinerary or Udasi).

'religious society', (or Sangat), started congregational traditions, of common prayer, common kitchen, and, above all, taught his Sikhs, Buddha, Lehna and others to become perfect beings. Also visited Multan and Achal Vatala to once-for-all defeat the tottering beliefs and rituals of the Sufis and the yogis, respectively. He then showed the greatest miracle of his life and his mystic tour de force by transmitting all his divine nature and power to his successor, Guru Angad. The end, in the worldly sense, came in 1539; actually his soul knows no disappearance, but an eternal Presence.

This is the historical background to Guru Nanak's personality as a mystic. All the notable facts and events of his life at once declare him a mystic e.g., his early preoccupation with saints and absorption in God; his other-worldliness and complete aversion to all mundane affairs leading to worldly strife and evil; his utmost honesty in service as a royal store-keeper and constant attention towards religious pursuits such as Simran and Kirtan; his healthy but detached married life; his long travels for saving humanity; his rejection of formal religion and ritualism; his message of love and peace as well as unity and equality of all human beings; his courageous stand against cruel rulers and bogus religious leaders; and last but not least, his emphasis on religious merit in selecting his successor after rejecting his sons, calling the successor Guru as 'Guru-disciple', thus transmitting all his spiritual

powers to him in a secret, mystical transfiguration.[117] The Guru certainly possessed enormous occult knowledge and extraordinary esoteric powers[118] which made his external (temporal) life a proof and fulfilment of the inner spiritual reality.

As stated earlier, Guru Nanak's lasting work, however, i.e. his real name and fame, is directly related not so much to historical, but to his numinous work, to his abiding poetic works in which he has projected all his mystic personality and genius in ambrosial words and expressions, so redolent of exquisite artistic beauty and charm. Nowhere perhaps in the history of mysticism, has a great mystic produced such close correspondence between truth and its representation in language -- a symbolic correspondence of course -- as Guru Nanak has achieved in his poetry.

HOMAGE TO GURU NANAK.

Bhai Gurdas, the St. Paul of Sikhism, who was himself a poet of great eminence and power, and was contemporary to four Gurus (third to sixth), used two unique metaphors[119]

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117. Cf. Bhai Gurdas, Var 1:37,45. "The Guru in his lifetime installed Lehna as Guru and got the canopy of Gurushin spread over his head. By mixing his divine light with that of Lehna, Satguru Nanak metamorphosed himself. Nobody can divine this mystery for the wonderful has met the wonderful. By changing his self he (Guru Nanak) created a new Being."

118. Cf. Duncan Greenlees, Gospel of Guru-Granth Sahib, pp. CLXVIII f.

119. Var, 1.27. The two lines in reference are: (1) "As the sun rose, the stars vanished and darkness fled," (2) "When the lion roars the animal fauna flees in utter panic."
(1) "Jeon kar suraj nikliya tare chhape andher ploa."
(2) "Singh buke mirgavali bhani jai na dhir dharoa."

i.e. the 'sun' and the 'lion' to symbolize and signify the inexpressible mystic impact of Guru Nanak. Needless to say, it is well-nigh impossible to find better metaphors or symbols than these two.[120]

Trilochan Singh in his recent study of Guru Nanak has also chosen the same metaphor of the 'sun' to introduce the advent of the great Guru viz. "Five hundred years ago, the light of Guru Nanak descended on our unhappy earth like the dawn of fully-resplendent sun."[121]

Duncan Greenlees, speaking of Guru Nanak's position in history and beyond history says:

> "History shows that, however clever it may be no eclectic philosophy has survived much beyond the generation of its invention, yet the personal influence of Guru Nanak on his disciples is certainly no less today than it was two hundred years ago and may even be held to be growing warmer and more devotional." 122

More than a hundred years ago, an unknown foreigner wrote about the advent of Guru Nanak in the following words:

> "There was a man -- we dare not say -- sent from God, on whom so large a portion of divine afflatus had fallen, that to him the great gift of welding the hearts of men, of developing a new idea, was conceded. He stood on the confines of a new dispensation, and recognized his position ..." 123

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120. Cf. Dewan Singh, Guru Nanak di Sahitik Pratibha ate Hor Lekh, (Guru Nanak's Poetic Genius and other Essays), in Panjabi, pp. 12. f.

121. Guru Nanak: A Revolutionary Prophet, p.1.

122. Gospel of Guru-Granth Sahib, p. clxviii.

123. Gooroo Nanak (Anonymous), 1859, ed. Nahar Singh, p.31.

The same author has tried to assess the Guru's mystic person in words so simple but so significant:

> "Humble was his position and honey were his words, he preached peace, and love and mutual concessions; he taught, that men were the sons of one father, and he laughed to scorn the show of ceremonials; he was as meek as Aarom, as full of wisdom as the author of Ecclesiastes; he sought to bring the world into subjection by the influence of his mild doctrines." 124

Carlyle's final assessment of the Great Man expressed in an inimitable mystical language applies most appropriately to Guru Nanak:

> "The Great Man was always as lightning out of Heaven; the rest of men waited for him like fuel, and then they too would flame." 125

The mystic Thoreau also admits in luminous words the extremely pervasive power of the mystic:

> "The virtues of a superior man are like the wind; the virtues of a common man are like the grass; the grass when the wind passes over it, bends." 126

All reverence be to Guru Nanak the World Teacher[127] (Jagat-Gur-Baba)[128], and all homage. Guru Arjan, the fifth Nanak, calls him "Sat Gur Nanak, the most exalted of all..."[129]

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124. Ibid., p. 32.

125. Heroes and Hero-worship, p. 103. (The Hero as Prophet). Cf. J.W. Kaye who saw in Cunningham's treatment of Guru Nanak a striking resemblance to Carlyle's treatment of Muhammad. The Calcutta Review, xi, No. 22, 527 n. quoted in J.S. Grewal, Essays in Sikh History, p. 132.

126. Henry D. Thoreau, Walden or Life in the Woods, p. 149.

127. Cf. The title of the book on Guru Nanak by G.S. Mansukhani: Guru Nanak World Teacher.

128. Words of encomium used by Bhai Gurdas, Var, 24: 3,4

129. Perhaps the highest tribute ever paid to Guru Nanak, coming as it does from a successor Guru who had the truest mystic perception of his greatness. Suhi, AG. 750.

CHAPTER V.

MYSTICAL CONCEPTS OF GURU NANAK - 1.

THE MYSTIC GROUND[1] OR GOD - MYSTICISM.

Mysticism, paradoxically speaking, is universal as well as empirical, egalitarian as well as elective.

As Eckhart, the great Christian mystic, remarks in purely mystical language: "The more God is in all things the more He is outside them. The more he is within, the more without."[2] The meaning underlying the paradox in this statement seems to be that the divine penetration into the objects of the physical world is proportionate to a corresponding trancendentalism outside the visible phenomenon; inversely speaking, the unfathomable divine Ground has a corresponding outer reality which may be called, in the words of T.S.Eliot, an "objective correlative."[3]

Otto observes in this context: "The resting unity is the raison d'dtre of the moving multiplicity and it is by reason of the oneness of these two that the Godhead is dives per se."[4]

The Ground constitutes the Divine Being, and also His manifestation which is 'becoming' or change; and both form

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1. The term as used by Aldous Huxley in Perennial Philosophy, Chap.II. Cf. Gopal Singh, Religion of the Sikhs, p.30. "God is the All-ground."

2. Otto, Mysticism East and West, p.174.

3. Eliot, of course, has used this term in a different sense, Selected Essays, p.145.

4. Op.cit., p.175.

the one, unitive Reality of Mysticism. Plato conceived the physical world as a shadow of the eternal reality, which Isaac Penington calls "a true shadow in its own place."[5] Thus the inner (mystical) and the outer (objective) aspects of Reality, intellectually understandable on the plane of realitivity, ultimately form the one Unknowable Ground.

It is, therefore, necessary to accept Reality in both its aspects and to discuss the Mystic Ground as well as its objective correlative, which latter we shall study in the next chapter under the title 'The Mystic Path'. The ineffable mystical experience, when put to intellectual scrutiny and analysis in human language, lends itself to the study of mystical content or thought as well as the mystical method or way, i.e. the ultimate goal as well as the immediate, tangible path. Most of the recondite mystical concepts, concerned with Godhead, and its manifestative qualities, are covered by the term Mystic Ground, as adapted and used by us.

As a whole, mysticism being considered as higher thought and higher aemotion (rather, the highest), the proper word, denoting the rational as well as emotive apotheosis, would be 'Contemplation' which was often used in Europe to signify Christian mysticism.

Mysticism is not merely feeling nor mere cognition but a higher synthesis of both. It is thus the combined essence

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5. Inge, Mysticism in Religion, p.99.

of religion and philosophy. Guru Nanak's mysticism is essentially of this representative type for which the word 'Contemplation' may be the most appropriate one.[6]

The mystical concepts as such are properly not objects of knowledge at all, according to a curious doctrine of Immanuel Kant. Therefore, our perceptions of "God","Soul", and 'immortality' are without any significance unless they become objects of faith and belief which lead to moral and spiritual elevation in the actual lives of those who thus mystically believe.[7]

NIRGUN BRAHM OR GODHEAD.

God-mysticism deals both with Godhead and God which are actually not two but one. The concept of Godhead, as distinct from the concept of God, is however, our first mystical concern. Godhead is that absolute entity which may be called the highest conception of the Divine Being. It is the same Absolute Brahman or the Impersonal God of the Hindu Vedanta Mysticism. In the words of Aldous Huxley: 'The divine Ground of all existence is a spiritual Absolute, ineffable in terms of discursive thought, but (in certain circumstances)

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6. Cf. According to Dionysius of Athens, 'the abstract Reason' (or Logos) which implies mystical contemplation, is the only way that leads to God. "Contemplation is a gift of God but it can be prepared by prayer and purification." Quoted in Marquette, Introduction to Comparative Mysticism, pp.146 f.

7. Cf. William James, Varieties of Religious Experience, p.60. Cf. Carlyle: "Without a spiritual belief in a Divine Being, in the knowledge of whom, and obedience to whom, mortal welfare alone consists, the human race must degenerate." Quoted in Paul Brunton, Inner Reality, p.15.

susceptible of being directly experienced and realized by the human being. This Absolute is the God-without-form of Hindu and Christian mystical phraseology."[8]

Godhead is the Nirankar, or the Nirgun Brahm of Guru Nanak (which means the Formless, Attributeless God) and the Al-Haqq (the Real) of the Sufi mysticism, implying the 'abyss of Godhead'[9] as distinct from the personal Allah.[10] It is the Yonder of Plotinus who formulates Divinity into three aspects (a sort of spiritual Trinity) viz. (1) The Absolute Godhead (2) The Nous or The Spirit and (3) The Psyche or the Soul -- the causal life of our physical universe.[11] These three are corresponding to the Vedanta Trinity, Brahm Ishvar and Atman.

Plotinus describes the Godhead as the 'atmosphere breathed by beautified souls' or 'the sphere of solid, unchanging reality.'[12]

Eckhart says: "The Godhead gave all things up to God. 'The Godhead is poor, naked and empty as though it were not; it has not, wills not, wants not, works not, gets not. It is God who has the treasure and the bride in him, the Godhead is as void as though it were not."[13] Again: "God and

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8. Perennial Philosophy, p. 29 Cf. also Dewan Singh, Guru Nanak's Message in Japji, pp. 65 ff.

9. Ibid., p.30

10. Cf. Sura of Quran: "Your God is the one true God, there is no other God beside Him. He is the kind and merciful one." (II, 163), quoted in Marquette, Introduction to Comparative Mysticism, p.159.

11. Cf. Marquette, op. cit., p.120.

12. Inge, op. cit., pp.117 f.

13. Huxley, op. cit., p.33.

Godhead are as distinct as heaven and earth. Heaven stands a thousand miles above the earth and even so the Godhead is above God. God becomes and disbecomes ..."[14]

One has to pass over to this highest state of divinity i.e. Godhead in order to reach the highest truth or reality. Otto observes: "The seer has to pass beyond God into the silent void of the Godhead itself. This is the highest vision and whoever still has 'a God' has not yet reached to the highest and the last."[15] "It is the mirum which even in the terms of greatest exaltation one cannot embrace on account of its absolute 'otherness'. Like Brahman it is neither conscious, nor self-conscious. It is beyond the contrast of subject and object, known and knower."[16]

This Godhead is the pure Tauhid of Sufi mysticism or the Monism (Advaita) of Shankaracharya, the Sunyata of Buddhism[17] and the Sunn-Samadh[18] of Guru Nanak's Sikh mysticism. The Upanishadic dictum of "the one without a second," and

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14. Ibid., p.38.

15. Otto, op. cit., p.8.

16. Loc.Cit.

17. Cf. Suzuki, Mysticism, Christian and Buddhist, p.28, quoted in Stace, Mysticism and Philosophy, p.109. He says: "In Buddhist Emptiness (Sunyata) there is no time, no space, no becoming, nothingness."

18. Guru Arjan, Sukhmani, 21, AG, 290. (Sargun nirgun nirankar Sunn samadhi ap).

the '<u>neti neti</u>' (not this, not this), are clearly indicative of Godhead. "The divine one is a negation of negation", says Eckhart, "something to which nothing is to be added -- Every creature contains a negation: one denies that it is the other ... but God contains the denial of denials."[19]

This concept of Godhead somehow gets linked up with the concept of human or spiritual "identity with God" which Eckhart emphasized and which the great Sufi mystic Mansur so boldly exemplified in his person as well as thought. Sufism most probably derived this concept of Indetification of man with the Divine Being from the Vedanta mysticism. Though references to this concept can be traced in Guru Nanak's expressions on this subject.[20] Yet he has so much reinterpreted or recast it that it has become almost a new concept in his mystical philosophy.

Guru Nanak's version of this Vedantic concept of <u>Aham bram asmi</u> or <u>an-al-Haq</u> ("I am God") may be aptly expressed in the words of Henry Suso: "In the merging of itself in God, the spirit passes away and yet not wholly; for it receives indeed some attributes of Godhead, but it does not become God in nature ... It is still a something which has been created out of nothing and continues to

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19. Stace, <u>op.cit</u>., p.225.

20. <u>Cf. Siri, AG</u>., 23. "He Himself is the beautiful, Himself the (aesthetic) taste and also one who enjoys." (Ape rasia ap ras ape rawanhar ...), the whole hymn.

be everlastingly."[21]

When a soul (atman) becomes one with the Primal-soul (Param-atman) i.e. with Godhead or what Eckhart calls "the ground of the soul" (in mystical language) and what Materlinck (in modern language) calls "temple enseveli"[22] it is certainly a unity or unification between two separated entities (after a contingent separation, of course, but not real) as between fire and fuel, or between ocean and a drop, (many other such metaphors have been used by the mystics); and though this merger or blend can apparently be taken to mean a complete identity, actually it is only a unification as between cause and effect or between a seed and its germination. Only a mystic like Mansur or Shamas Tabrez, in a flush of mystical exaltation and pride (which in modern terminology has been called Faustian urge)[23] and in some unguarded moment, claims complete oneness or identity with Godhead -- a position which is difficult to support or defend in terms of rational or non-mystical ratiocination. Guru Nanak, therefore, has taken a more tenable and rational stand when he lays emphasis on the dictum of tat-tvam-asi ("That art thou") instead of aham-brahm-asmi ("I am God") or Sohang ("I am that"). He says:

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21. Quoted in Stace, op.cit., p.223. Cf.H.D.Lewis, Our Experience of God, p.222. "No one, saint or mystic a or any other, can ever be literally at one with God and have all veils torn apart, however, perfect or final the union may be in all other regards."

22. Otto, op. cit., p.205 n.

23. Ibid.,p.181.

"Thou art the Eternal one, Thou created the universe as Thine play in otherness." 24

Addressing Godhead directly as Nirgun Brahm, Guru Nanak repeatedly affirms the eternal oneness which does not accept any change or duality with the Godhead assuming attributes. In one hymn ~~his~~ he repeats five times the basic dictum: "True is the One, none else exists. Thou art one, Thou art one." 25

Guru Nanak steers his thought clear of the two extreme polarities of advaita (monism) as well as dvaita (duality) and, in agreement with Ramanuja, he decides in favour of the vishishtadvaita (qualified Monism) concept of Godhead. It is a strictly-conceived principle of absolute monotheism which accepts duality only as a working principle. 26

These mystical niceties of course become real only on the plane of intellectual gnosis; actually speaking, the mystical state of unity or union is unknowable and ineffable. It is only a subject of realization or contemplation. All human bonds and shackles are snapped at this supra-sensuous stage, for union with God is salvation. In the words of Dionysius of Athens: "It is in the supreme part of the soul that the mystical operation takes place. To that

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24. Var Majh, AG., 143. (Sada sad tu ik hai tudh duja khel rachaia).

25. Ibid., AG., 144. (Asat ek digar kui, ek tui, ek tui).

26. Cf. Jodh Singh, Guru Nanak Memorial Lectures (Panjabi), 'Third Lecture', pp. 37 f. and Taran Singh, Guru Nanak: Chintan te Kala (Panjabi), p. 190.

portion of the soul which no passion can reach, is to be assigned the contemplation of the pure and profound verties.[27]

Guru Nanak's exalted position in the whole mystical literature, as affirmed by Taran Singh,[28] is primarily due to his emphasis on and strict adherence to the basic mystic concept of the transcendental oneness and absoluteness of Godhead[29] expressed by him, time and again, in the more or less original terms, nirankar, nirgun, alakh, abhey, agam, agochar, anath, ajuni, akath, nirbhau, nirvair, akal-murat, apar, aparampar, agadh, adrisht, abhul, trigun-atit, achal, adol and so on, whose negativeness is the truest affirmation of the beyondness of Godhead.[30] All these negative appelations of Godhead signify the same fundamental truth of the inscrutiability, infinitude, invisibility and ineffability of Godhead, Guru Nanak has most emphatically and frequently referred to the veracity of the extreme inability of human language to express the inexpressible reality of Godhead. Like other great mystics, the ancient Rishis, the Buddha, Plotinus, Eckhart, Al-Ghazali, Hujwiri and so on, Guru Nanak prefers the mystic language of symbols to express what cannot be rendered in ordinary human language, however,

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27. Marquette, op.cit., p.147.

28. Op.cit., p.176.

29. Cf. Guru Gobind Singh, Jap, passim.

30. Cf. Dewan Singh, Guru Nanak's Message in Japji, Chap. 'The Ineffable Lord', pp.68 ff. See also S.S.Kohli, Outlines of Sikh Thought, p.23.

articulate and developed it may be. In his own words:

"Great is the Lord and lofty His abode.
Still more lofty is His Holy Name.
If one rises so high as that,
He may (perhaps) know such a lofty one."[31]

Again:

"God is as great as He wishes to be;
Nanak, He the truthful One alone knows about himsel
If one be speaks something out of limit or propriety,
He will certainly be dubbed as the most foolish and vulgar among men." 32

The ineffable Godhead, or the Absolute Being, who has no form or external manifestation whatsoever which may be called his real self or image and all whose visible, tangible 'emanations"[33] are only symbolical, is only perceived and realized, intuitively and mystically, in the soul itself, directly as well as empirically. "Incommunicableness", says William James, "of the transport is the keynote of all mysticism. Mystical truth exists for the individual who has the transport, but for no one else. In this, it resembles the knowledge given to us in sensation more than that given by conceptual thought."[34] Guru Arjan says:

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31. Japji,24, trans. Dewan Singh, op.cit., p.65 (Vada sahib ucha thao, uche upar ucha nao, Evad ucha hovai koe, ~~this~~ Tis uche ko janai soe).

32. Ibid.,p.139 (Jeved bhavai teved hoe. Nanak janai sacha soe. Je ko akhai bol vigarh, Ta likhiai sir gavara gavar.).

33. For the well-known mystical theory of 'Emanation' propounded by Plotinus, see Inge. Mysticism in Religion, p.115.

34. Varieties of Religious Experience, p.318.

"The treasure of bliss is the ambrosial God's Name.
It rests in the mind of the bhagats or true devotees.[35]

But Guru Nanak has not denoted Godhead merely by negations. He has also given expressions of positive affirmation. In the mystical prologue to the Adi Granth (called mul-mantar in Sikh parlance) the very first term used for Godhead, by Guru Nanak, is EK-OANKAR, which means "The One-All-Pervading" i.e. the Absolute One who has nevertheless infinite extension and expansion.[36] The second denotive term he has used is SAT-NAM, ("His Name is true"),[37] which implies that "the only eternal or abiding being is He" (signifying thereby that all manifestation is in itself transient and contingent while only Godhead is everlasting). The third positive affirmation in the mul-mantar is KARTA-PURKH which means the "Creator-Immanent One"[38] after which term the negational signification begins, and, again, the last word in the mul-mantar is positive, viz. GUR-PRASAD which means "by the grace of the Guru He is known". The ingress of the grace of the Guru, it may be pointed out, is always a mystical process, and the Guru as Logos works as an

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35. Sukhmani, 1., AG., 262. (Sukhmani sukh amrit prabh nam. Bhagat jana kai man bisram.)

36. Cf. Bhai Vir Singh, Santhia Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Vol. 1, pp. 1 ff. (ed. Balbir Singh), See also Taran Singh, Guru Nanak: Chintan te Kala. p. 179.

37. Cf. "Eternal Truth is His Name", SSWS, 28.

38. Cf. "Maker of all things", Loc. Cit.

intercessional medium[39] between Godhead and the individual soul, about which elaborate discussion has been done under the caption "The Guru and Sabad".[40]

The Slok (or epigram) immediately following the Mul-mantar also significantly expresses the eternal aspect of Godhead:

> "God was True in the beginning, True in the various Ages.
>
> True He is, says Nanak, and True He will ever be."[41]

Many other positive names of God can be easily gathered and cited from the Adi Granth, e.g. kirpal, dayal, karim, rahim, datar, kartar, sachcha, parvardgar, kadir, miharvan, khasam, malik, sahib, din-dayal, sultan, mir, dukh-harata, ichha-purak, antaryami, samrath and so on, which collectively imply the attributes of divine grace, compassion, bounty, creative power, omnipotence and almightiness.[42]

The concept of Godhead, though in itself indicative of pure absolutism, simultaneously connotes its other inevitable aspect of the personal God (often called by the simple names of

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39. Cf. Guru Arjan, Var Ram'ali, Slok AG., 957. "As I had heard, I have found the Guru. He joins the separated ones to God, as he is an advocate in God's Court." (Jaisa Satgur Sunida taiso hi mai dith. Vichharia mele prabhu har dargah ke basith.).

40. See Infra. Chap.VI

41. Dewan Singh, op. cit., p.108. (Adi sach, jugadi sach, hai bhi sach, Nanak hosi bhi sach).

42. Cf. G.S. Talib, Guru Nanak and His Personality, p.113.

God, Prabhu, Allah, Khuda, Ram, Hari, Madho, Kesho, Murari and Gobind, some of which have been borrowed from the Hindu and Muslim religious usage in order to induce a psychological appeal inherent in the traditional and racial character called "collective unconscious",[43] so much so that it is not always possible to distinguish one from the other. In Sikhism, both the Nirgun and Sargun aspects of Brahm are presented as one entity, which is probably the truest appreciation of this paradoxical belief. Guru Arjan has described the bifurcated nature of Godhead in most lucent terms:

> "The Formless One is both Sargun as well as Nirgun Brahm and He is eternally in Sunn-Samadh condition. He created the universe out of Himself, says Nanak, and then remembered Himself."44

Teja Singh has rendered this Slok as under:[45]

PROLOGUE

> "The Formless One is both Absolute and Related; He
> Himself was in the Primordial trance,
> And Himself stirred the Divine energy into the
> creation, through which He contemplates Himself."

Since Guru Nanak conceived these uncanny truths in deeply mystical realization and purely intuitive contemplation, he has made many prophetic revelations in his Word or Gurbani

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43. See James Drever, A Dictionary of Psychology, p.43. It is a term used to a considerable extent by Jung to signify those elements in the individual unconscious derived from the experiences of the race.

44. Sukhmani, 21, AG.,290 (Sargun nirgun nirankar sunn-smadhi ap, Apan kia Nanaka ape hi phir jap.) Cf. Jairam Mishr, art. "Guru Nanak Dwara Nirupat Brahm ate Jiv", Guru Nanak Jiwan Darshan ate Kav Kala, p.110 f. He has devised three aspects of Brahm, Nirgun, Sargun and Nirgun-Sargun-Complex.

45. Psalm of Peace, p.103.

which is replete with poetic expressions of the highest mystical value. A recent writer has referred to this aspect of Guru Nanak's contribution to world religion:[46]

> "The faith which the Guru preached to mankind through his word is a clearly apprehended set of ideal concepts, mutually consistent and proceeding from the vision which must have come to him at the time the mantle of prophecy fell on him."

The basis of Guru Nanak's thought being essentially that of a mystic, as another writer affirms, his strict belief in divine unity need not destroy the idea of 'duality' but to 'swallow it up' in the rapture of divine love. The creation in itself is not only expressive of the creator behind it but serves as a symbol which points to the Reality that lies beyond it. "The ultimate essence of God is beyond all human categories, far transcending all powers of human expression. Only in experience can He be truly known. Man must indeed seek to give human expression to this mystical experience and Guru Nanak's works are directed to this very end, but the human expression can communicate no more than a glimpse of the ultimate reality."[47]

Guru Nanak has laid great emphasis on the contemplation and invocation of the Attribubuteless (Nirgun), Formless (Nirankar), Immaculate (Niranjan) Godhead:

> "Where ever I see, I find the generous Lord.
>
> The benign God neither comes nor goes.

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46. G.S.Talib, op.cit., p.107.

47. Mcleod, Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion, p.165. Cf. J.S. Grewal, Guru Nanak: Some of His Key-Concepts, pp.5 f.

He has cleverly entered the hearts of all beings.

The world is the shadow of one who has neither sire nor mother.

Neither has He any sister, nor brother.

He has no birth or death, family or caste:

Such an eternal one is after my heart."[48]

Epithets like Atit (beyond) and Nehkewal (pure) used by the Guru clearly refer to the absolute Godhead:

"The Transcendent One abides as Pure Being,
with whom the Guru joins being with being."[49]

Guru Nanak has no dearth of words to express the Absolute Godhead. He calls Him Aprampar and Niralam i.e. (Beyond of the Beyond):

"The Absolute one has assumed the state of void.

He Himself is Beyond of the Beyond.

After creating the Cosmos He sees it - a void-like creation made out of mere void." 50

This void (Sunn or sunyata) is the Primal State of Godhead. The Guru has beautifully described this state of endless chaos (dhundhukara) in full sixteen stanzas of a hymn called Maru Solhe, the first Stanza being:

"For countless Ages there was chaos and chaos.

There was no Ether or Earth -- only God's infinite will prevailed.

There was neither day nor night, nor moon nor sun:
The Primal Being was in Sunn-samadh condition."51.

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48. Maru Solhe, AG., 1038.

49. Maru Solhe, AG., 1040.

50. Ibid., AG., 1037.

51. Ibid., AG., 1035-36.

The Sunn-samadh condition or state of Godhead is truly mystical and ineffable. It is only realizable in the Fourth state (Turya) by the favoured, Reality-perceiveing soul. This state has been called the "deep and more than deep" (atigambhira) by Shankara in his commentary on Gita. The Mandukya upanishad calls it 'unfathomable ocean (dushparveshyam). It is the Upanishadic Eternal Being called sat or atisaya (the quite transcendent one).[52]

Examples expressive of Godhead can be easily multiplied. In fact, Adi Granth is full of such mystical expressions of the inexpressible one, and this is one of the most favourite subjects of the poets included in this scripture, beside Guru Nanak. Hence we pass on to the next stage of Godhead known as God or Ishavara, in the technical sense.

SARGUN BRAHM: CREATOR-GOD.

From impersonal Reality, we come down to the personal or from supernal to the empirical. Here the One appears as Many, and this is what provides illusion to the outward-perceiving mind.

Actually speaking, Godhead and God are just one-entity, equally eternal and immortal to the ordinary human being. There can be no idea of duality between them. The one is the Higher state, the other Lower which is a relative difference, not real. All spiritual ascent is from relative to absolute, from personal to impersonal, from particular to

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52. Otto, op. cit., pp.23-27.

universal. "Mysticism", says Keyserling, "always ends in an impersonal immortality."[53]

The Nirgun God turns into Sargun and yet remains Nirgun -- this is the essential truth about Godhead and God. Guru Nanak takes the twofold Reality as one. According to him, the basic unity of God always remains indivisible and unsplit, though it appears to have acquired a seeming duality. In Guru Nanak there is all along a strong affirmation of unity -- the transcendent and the immanent aspects of Godhead are always unitive:

> "My Lord is one, He is One, my brother, He is One."[54]

Again:

> "The One Lord takes away and gives (everything, to all beings): I have not heard of any one else beside Him."[55]

The underlying spiritual principle is the one Lord; there is none else who can exist beside or without Him. The whole creation lies within the existence of the one Lord:

> "There is but One giver of all beings, whom I may never forget." 56

The very first Credal Statement in the Adi Granth, so succintly enunciated by Guru Nanak, called mul-mantar, begins with the affirmation of One God, who is everlasting

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53. Inge., op.cit., p.162.

54. Asa, AG., 350 (Sahib mera eko hai. Eko hai bhai eko hai).

55. Patti (ASA), 2, AG., 433. (Eko levai eko devai avar na duja mai sunia).

56. Japji, 5, AG. (Gura ik deh bujhai sabhna jia ka it data so mai visar na jai).

Name, who is the Creator and so on: "God is one, All-prevading (EK-OANKAR), Everlasting Name (Sat-Nam), The Creator Being (Karta Purakh) ..."[57]

But it is with the Lower, Sargun Brahm i.e. the Creator-God (Ishavar) that all theism in religion begins. The monistic Godhead becomes the monotheistic God, by assuming the three gunas or attributes.[58]

According to Mcleod: "It is in this Saguna aspect that man can know God and accordingly it is this aspect which is the object of Guru Nanak's meditation and of his expository utterances."[59]

The Sargun Brahm of Guru Nanak is the Creator, Sustainer and Destroyer, according to the assumption by Him of the threefold (trigun or tribidh) principle of Maya. The One Mother (Mai) produces three children i.e. the three controlling deities, Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, who are the efficient causes of creation, preservation and dissolution of the universe.[60]

With the transformation of Nirgun Brahm into its Sargun aspect, the transcendental and absolute Being turns into an immanent Reality and with this comes the basic pantheistic tendency in all Hindu mysticism, in fact, in all

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57. Japji, Prologue (Mul-mantar), Ag.,1.

58. Cf. S. S. Kohli, Outlines of Sikh Thought, pp. 18-24; J. S. Grewal, Guru Nanak: Some of His Key Concepts, p. 5; and Mcleod, Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion, pp. 167-69.

59. Op. cit., p. 168.

60. Japji, 30, AG., 7.

types of mysticism. Sikh mysticism is no exception but there is this peculiarity or special merit in Sikhism that it strikes a remarkable synthesis between trict monotheism and a necessary, almost a bare pantheism, so that the basic unity of Godhead is not abrogated.

The Hindu Vedanta mysticism, leaning always towards monism, and the medieval Hindu Bhakti mysticism slanting towards too much pantheism in the form of idol-worship, could not maintain this necessary balance which Sikhism could. Similarly the Sufi mystic development, though basically nourished by Islamic Monotheism of a strict type, ultimately ended in the proliferation of the Vedantic idea of monistic 'identification' and the Bhakti emotional pantheism. In Guru Nanak we find this ubliquitious combination of pure-monotheism with a 'creative immanence', which is not exactly pantheism but 'panentheism'[61]

The One God, by His own infinite, ineffable Will (Hukam), has infinitely multiplied and diversified Himself into an expansive universe which, though limited and conditioned in time-space-continuum and cause-effect-contingency, is infinitely representative of the infinititude inherent in the Creator-God. To cite a few examples from Guru Nanak:

> "He is Himself the Tablet, the Pen and the writing thereof.

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61. "The doctrine that all things are within the being of God who is yet merely the whole of actual things." Gaynor, Dictionary of Mysticism.

Let us say He is the only One, why think of a second?" 62

Again:

"By creating two aspects, the One remained One.

By infusing divine knowledge inside man, He created a 'dialectic' (Vad).

Participation and seclusion are the two polarities, between which the religion is to mediate." 63

The concept of the 'Primordial monism' becoming 'creative dualism' and still retaining its pristine unitive truth, is the hall mark of Guru Nanak's mysticism and has been most explicitely and forcefully expressed by him in the three Vars or 'heroic odes' written by him in Ragas,[64] Majh, Asa and Malar. whereas the Sloks added to the Pauris (i.e. stanzas) later on, by Guru Arjan, the compiler of the Adi Granth, selecting and choosing preferrably from the same Guru-poet who had written the Pauris of the particular Var,[65] express religions ideas in a general tone and manner, the pauris in a Var present a well-knit sequential train of ideas

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62. Var Malar, Slok, AG,1291. (Ape patti kalam ap upar lekh bhi tu. Eko kahiai Napaka duja kahi ku).

63. Ibid., Pauri,5, AG., 1280.

64. A Raga or Rag is a musical note which serves as the particular rhythm in the poetical compositions of the Sikh Gurus, such as Siri Rag, Asa Rag, Maru Rag etc. All the poetry included in the Ade Granth has not been arranged poet-wise but according to the Ragas, which are 31 in all, beginning with Siri Rag which is the chief or primal Raga. Cf. MK. 769.

65. Originally the Vars in Adi Granth comprised only the Pauris or Stanzas which were numbered (and each number coming after each stanza) the addition of Sloks was an editorial innovation undertaken by Guru Arjan in order to illustrate and augment the thought in a Pauri by adding one or more sloks with it. Cf. MK.,817.

specially in praise of the Nirgun-cum-Sargun Prabhu (i.e.God) or the saviour Nam-giving Guru (who again is identical with the primal Brahm) and also in eulogy of the Guru-faced man or Sikh (called Gurmukh), who has his opposite or rival in the self-faced or self-engrossed man of the world (called Manmukh).

SRISHTI (CREATION) AND MAYA.

By far the most significant thought expressed in these vars of Guru Nanak and for that matter, in the vars composed by the other Gurus), however, is the elucidation of the mystical process involved in the 'creativity' assumed or undertaken by the Nirgun-Brahm in the form of the Ishvara, the Creator-God (the Karta-Purkh) with the help of the magical creative-agency called Maya.

How the One created this manifold, multiple universe, is a great mystery, indeed, No one knows how and when it all happened. Guru Nanak has, in one stroke, rejected the cosmogenic theories of Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam, by uttering the mystical truth that when God created this world, none existed except God and hence no one can know about it or say anything about it.[66] His own considered view about this matter is non-committal and thus truly mystical and correct. He simply avers that the unknown cannot be known:

"Only God Himself knows when He creates the world."[67]

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66. Cf. Japji, 21, AG., 4.

67. Loc.Cit., (Ja Karta sirthhi ko saje ape janai soi).

The absolute truth cannot be known or stated by discursive reason. The Pandits, Yogis and the Qazis[68] tried to guess about it in vain. Guru Nanak wisely desists from making any attempt to probe the unplumbable.

But his poetic genius has come very handy in describing the cosmogenic truth of the creation of the world in very vivid metaphors and expressions in the said vars. In Var Majh, the first and second stanzas (Pauris), in fact almost all the Stanzas, touch the cosmogenic subject. The var proper begins with:

> "You are the Inscrutable creator Lord, who created the world.
>
> You produced the many-hued and multi-phased universe."

Again in Stanza two, the divine poet says:

> "You created the world and gave people vocations to do
>
> By transposing the element of beguilement, you distracted the world." 69.

The Var Asa, similarly, begins with:

> "He Himself became the Creator Being and then created the Nam (or Logos);
>
> Then He created an alter self as creation and was pleased to see this new receptacle." 70

The opening lines in the Var Malar are even more explicitly metaphorical:

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68. A Qazi is an Islamic Jurist or Judge, also religious scholar. Cf. MK, 237.

69. Var Majh, Pauri, 1, 2. AG., 138-39.

70. Var Asa, Pauri, 1, AG, 463.

"He created Himself and thus took His own cognizance.

By separating heaven from earth, He spread a conopy.

By raising heavens without any support, He signified Sabad (Logos).

By creating the sun and the moon, He permeated as light.

He made the night and the day -- a prodigious wonder." 71

Though silent about the unknowable time of the beginning of creation, Guru Nanak has mystically divined and expressed the possible manner or process of creation. As we have seen in the lines quoted above from his vars, God created the universe (sansar) out of Himself by a mysterious cause, in order to know or see Himself, as if in a mirror in which He could see His own image -- a metaphor used by the Sufis and also found in the Sikh theology.[72] The Divine will (Hukam) may be said to be the hidden cause behind creation. This Hukam, as we shall discuss in detail further on in this chapter, created the Ishavara - Maya complex, with the three Gunas to form the efficient causes and thus the whole cosmic play began. In the words of Guru Nanak:

"From the true Lord emanated air and from air came into being water.

From water He created the three worlds[73] and everywhere He infused His inner light." 74

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71. Var Malar, Pauri,1, AG., 1279.

72. "By Holding mirror in His hand He sees Himself." (Apanre hath arsi ape hi dekhe). Bhai Gurdas, Var 2,1.

73. i.e. tribhavan, or trilok, (Surg, prithavi and patal- heaven earth and the nether world), see MK, 455.

74. Siri AG, 19.

Again:

"Water is the first Being which infused life in all objects." 75

The whole creation came out of void and chaos (Sunn) by some involutionary and evolutionary process of Emanation[76] or divine manifestation. Guru Nanak has at many places touched this subject in his usual mystical manner:

"From chaos He created Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva.

From chaos emanated all the cosmic Ages.

... ...

From chaos came out the sun, the moon and the heavens.

His own light is pervading in the three worlds.

In the Void Infinite, the Invisible and Transcendent Lord sits in contemplation.

From chaos He created earth and heavenly spheres; He fixed them up in space without any support, by some divine mechanism.

By creating three worlds and the encompassing maya He creates and destroys everything Himself." 77

Again:

"For countless aeons there was nothing but chaos.

The Infinite One remained in pure contemplation.

In that chaos the Absolute Lord sat Himself alone, and there was no creative expansion." 78

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75. Var Asa, Salok, AG, 473.

76. Obvious reference is to the well-known theory of Emanation propounded by Plotinus, Cf. Inge, Mysticism in Religion, p. 114 f. See also Gaynor, Dictionary of Mysticism. This doctrine means that nothing can be evolved without first being involved.

77. Maru, AG., 1037.

78. Ibid., AG., 1026.

For Guru Nanak the bewitching, magical maya, which forms the causal basis of creation, is not unreal or without substance, though its role is that of beguilement, deception and treachery. The metaphors of fly (makhi),[79] she-serpent (sarpani),[80] the beltlike rope (maikhali), 81 the 'one-Mother' (eka Mai)[82] the chameleon-coloured (suha-rang)[83] the shadow-like (chhaya maya)[84] the evil mother-in-law (sas buri)[85] used by Guru Nanak to denote the baffling maya, are very significant as they clearly signify its true nature, full of duplicity and illusoriness. So are the meaningful phrases used by him to describe its deceiving function meant to distract the ignorant and gullible human beings, e.g., maya-moh or maya mamta mohini (the attractive maya), trikuti (the three-pronged maya, having three gunas), tribidh (the three-phased), maya rachna dhoh (the undeceivable deciever)[86] and so on.

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79. Var Malar, Slok, AG., 1286.

80. Malar, AG., 1274, See also Sri, AG., 63.

81. Maru, AG., 1037.

82. Japji, 30, AG., 7.

83. Gauri, AG., 221.

84. Ibid., AG., 228.

85. Asa, AG., 355.

86. Ibid., AG., 25. Cf. Shankar calls maya indefinitum (anirvachaniya), see Jodh Singh, art. "Guru Nanak Dev ate Vedant", Guru Nanak: Jiwan, Darshan ate Kav Kala, ed. S.S.Kohli, p.79.

From these phrases the paradoxical nature of maya becomes quite clear. The term Sarpani (which is also called kundalni in the esoteric tantric terminology)[87] is probably the most cogent and representative symbol used for maya, not only by Guru Nanak but also by Kabir and other Bhagats.

As to the question whether the creation is real or unreal, Guru Nanak has followed Ramanuja in rejecting the monistic concept of an illusory universe postulated by Shankara (i.e. the rope appearing as a snake in darkness) and, instead, regards the maya and the universe (Jagat) as something substantial and real, and not a mere supposition or superimporition.[88] He has gone even farther than Ramanuja to invest the creation with the venerable sanctity reserved for the supra-creation spiritual universe. His positive dictum regarding this problem is that the world is real and sacred like a temple (dharamsal)[89] because it is the creation of the Truthful Lord. How can the world created by the Real Being be unreal? But when the Real Being is forgotten by the deceived and engrossed human beings, for them the world is certainly unreal and, in fact, a sure place of destruction.[90] So, according to Guru Nanak, there are two different planes

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87. Cf. Nikhilananda, Hinduism (Chap: "Tantra: A way of Realisation"), pp. 154 ff.

88. Cf. Nikhilananda, Hinduism, pp. 41, 45.

89. Japji, 34, AG., 7.

90. Cf. Var Asa, Salok (Pauri, 2): "True are the regions and the worlds created by you ..." AG, 463. and slok (Pauri, 10): "False is the king and false the populace; false is all the world." AG, 468. The original text, respectively: "Sache tere khand sache brahmand" and "Kur raja kur parja kur sabh sansar."

on which the world is real and unreal in consonance with the redeemed and unregenerate conditions of man respectively.

NATURE MYSTICISM OR VISMAD

Guru Nanak, after accepting creation as something real and beautiful (because it reflects the Divine Beauty to which he always remains attached and united in true bonds of love), expresses a great sense of wonder (vismad) when face to face with the cosmic phenomena. This is the essence of his great and exuberant Nature mysticism. He falls into divine rapture when he conseives of the vast, endless and infinite Universe. When he expresses his deep sense of wonder, it is simply sublime.

The supreme example of this divine ecstatic perception of cosmic beauty is his famous piece in which he thinks of heaven as a salver, sun and moon as lamps, stars as pearls and so on, all conjoining to form the cosmic invocation to the Supreme Being, called Arti, which retains its grandeur even in translation:

"The firmament is Thy salver,
The sun and moon Thy lamps;
The galaxy of stars are the pearls scattered,
The woods of sandal are Thine incense.
The breezes blow Thy royal fan;
The flowers of the forest
Lie as offering at Thy feet.
What wonderful worship with lamps is this
O Thou destroyer of fear!

Unstruck Music is the sound of Thy temple drums."[91]

He has even gone so far as to personify his Formless God (Nirankar) in human terms and human language in order to describe His ineffable beauty. It is, of course, a unique attempt at poetic symbolism and not a mere expression of authropomorphism or pantheism, in which both the strict monotheistic Guru Nanak did not believe. Only his unbounded love for his divine Beloved or Spouse inspires him to write such sublime and mystical poetry. The Sargun Brahm who is Almighty,Omnicient, Omnipresent, extremely Compassionate and Charitable, Benign and Benevolent, is also exceedingly Beautiful:

"You have bewitching eyes and ravishing teeth.
The capativating nose and lengthy tresses.
O your golden physique with your golden shield."[92]

Guru Nanak's two mystical rhapsodies of exquisite poetic felicity are reserved for the depiction and description of Nature (qudrat or prakriti) in all its cosmic and humanistic manifestations and the subtle portrayal of the exalted mystical feelings of amazement and wonder (vismad)[93] caused by imaginative contemplation of all that appeals to the human sensibility and to the inner spiritual-intuitive

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91. SSWS, 61 (Sohila Arti).

92. Wadhans, AG., 567.

93. Literal meaning, "amazing, astonishing, surprising"; mystical meaning, rapture or transport or sense of wonder while enjoying the divine beauty of Nature; see MK, 645. and Mcleod, Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion, pp.173,219 221, 226.

perception. Both these pieces are included in Guru Nanak's well-known composition, Var Asa,[94] the first beginning with: "Nature is visible, Nature is audible, the fear of Nature is the essence of bliss."[95] and the second opening with: "Wonderful is symphony, wonderful is knowledge."[96]

In the sphere of Nature mysticism,[97] perhaps few poems in all mystical literature compare with the 'Seasonal' poem of Guru Nanak called the Calendar (Baramah Tukhari Chhant) about which Loehlin remarks: "The changing seasons are the setting for picturing the vicissitudes of the soul's search for God ... Guru Nanak is close to nature and abounds in pithy earth metaphors ... Burden of (his) song is "Thy will must pervail". One should not moan but reside in His will."[98]

This sense of wonder (visмad), which Sufi mystics call hairat, is the highest mystical state in which the beholder is completely lost in the bewitching sight (mushahida) and what remains is only seeing (shahud).

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94. This litany has the status of (almost) daily recitation in Sikh congregational prayer in the morning, Cf. Taran Singh, Guru Nanak: Chintan te Kala (Panjabi), p.127. Cf. also MK, 69. and S.S.Kohli, Philosophy of Guru Nanak, p.68.

95. Var Asa, Slok (Pauri,3) AG., 464 (Qudrat disai qudrat suniai qudrat bhau sukh sar).

96. Ibid., AG, 463 (Visмad nad visмad ved).

97. For theoretical meaning of Nature-mysticism, see supra Chap. 1.

98. C.H.Loehlin, Twelve Months by Guru Nanak: Tukhari Chhant, p.3.

Nature-mysticism has been exquisitely interfused with God-mysticism by Guru Nanak in one supreme devotional apotheosis called Prema Bhakti i.e. Living devotion. Imaginative perception of divine beauty creates the chaste passion called love in the devotee's mind and love brings devotional attachment which is termed as Bhakti. This Bhakti mysticism which is akin to the Christian 'voluntaristic' mysticism "seeks to attain unity with the Highest through coalescence by an emotional exaggeration and glow of feeling. And even the highest is thought of as responding to amorous longings."[99] Ramanuja in the East and Luther in the West are Guru Nanak's precursors in this erotic and emotional mysticism.

Personal devotion in the form of love relationship inevitably presupposes a responsive and personal God whose tangible manifestation called 'Nature' attracts and inspires the devotee at all levels of consciousness. It is in this meaning that William James calls Nature-mysticism as "Expansions."[100] It is a sublimated naturalism even at its highest and most abstract forms and therefore, easily passes into the fervour of erotic mysticism. Nature-mysticism and Love-mysticism are generally co-expressive.

The beautiful, however, is not merely beautiful, but also true and good, as Plato conceived.[101] In the

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99. Otto, op.cit., p.34. Cf. Imaginative perception, in its highest quality, as in Shakespeare, is not imagination itself, "but imaginative insight into what life is like." H.D.Lewis, Our Experience of God, p.138.

100. Ibid., p.75.

101. Cf. Will Durant, Mansions of Philosophy, p.282.

ultimate analysis the sat, chit, and anand are just three facets of one Reality and are always inseparable from each other. The satyam, shivam and sundram of Indian mystical philosophy are just one ensemble. The firmament above and the moral law inside the man, which so deeply impressed Kant, are just corresponding realities or verities. Of similar import is Albert Schweitzer's remark about God." In the world He appears to me as mysterious, marvellous creative force, within me He reveals Himself as ethical will."[102]

Since the universe deeply reflects the Creator who is immanent, it cannot just be a place full of evil and misery as most pessimists make it to be. The divine truth is very much here, as nature mystics so strongly and imaginatively perceive. Plotinus rightly says that "all things that are Yonder are also Here below."[103]

The whole Truth whether transcendent or immanent is just one. Unless we perceive this unity, there can be no concrete basis for the sublime feelings of wonder, love, devotion, worship, compassion, humility, charity and so on. In fact, all ethos begins with the inevitable perception of unity in deversity. Truth, Beauty and Good are ONE, as keats declared.[104] Inge also affirms this ubiquitous fact:

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102. Charles Hartshorne, Philosophers Speak of God, p.298., quoted in Avatar Singh, Ethics of the Sikhs, p.32.

103. Inge, Outspoken Essays, p.278.

104. "Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty, that is all,
Ye know on earth and all ye need to know."
(Ode on a Grecian Urn).

"The Goal of Truth as an absolute value is unity, which in the outer world means harmony; in the intercourse of spirit with spirit, love; and in the inner world, peace or happiness. The goal of Goodness as an absolute value is the realisation of the ought-to-be in victorious moral effort. Beauty is the self-recognition of creative spirit in its own works; it is the expression of Nature's own deepest character. Beauty gives neither information nor advice; but it satisfies a part of our nature which is not less divine than that which pays homage to Truth and Goodness." 105

Beauty has the deepest and the widest impact on human beings who are directly and empirically affected by it, at all places and at all times, because it has the power to excite and enliven the imagination. Coleridge so aptly remarks that imagination is the capacity to see similarity in dissimilars or the power of combining the many in the one.[106] This imaginative perception of beauty that unites and binds even the dissimilars, is the true basis of all Nature-mysticism.

Guru Nanak is probably at his highest when he imaginatively perceives divine beauty in all the universe and then expresses his rapturous feelings in fascinating poetry. He gets so much lost in his mystical sense of wonder (vismad) and his complete 'identity' with Nature, that he can only utter "Wonderful",[107] or "Wonderful Lord"

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105. Outspoken Essays, p.272.

106. H.Read, Phases of English Poetry, p.125.

107. His favourites words were "Wah" "bal bal" and "Balihari" (meaning 'wonderful'). See MK, for their connotation. Cf. Var Asa, Slok (Pauri 12), AG., 469, for the word 'Balihari'.

(WAHIGURU).[108] In one small poem so bewitching for its magical poetic effect, he wants to be personified in Nature as a she-deer, a she-cuckoo, a she-fish and a she-serpent (all feminine metaphors, because in Indian mysticism man is symbolized as a 'bride' who has to find and meet her divine 'spouse', so that he may in ecstatic union with Nature meet the creator Lord.)[109]

Love, with its infinite expansiveness, is the basis of all Nature-mysticism, as it is of Bhakti-mysticism (which is also called Love-mysticism). Love which is the realization in experience of spiritual existence, has an unique value as a heirophant of the highest mystics.[110] For man it is inevitable, for he has to reach out to whatever is beautiful in the vast expanse of Nature. The whole cosmos is a standing challenge to man's loving capability. Love, says Tolstoy,

> is the inherent quality of a man's soul; he loves because he cannot help loving.[111]

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108. The most sanctified and popular Name for God used in Sikhism since the time of Guru Nanak and other Gurus. At first it was a secret mystic Name disclosed by the Guru to the deserving Sikh only but later it was declared as 'manifest'. In the Adi Granth it was not used by the Gurus themselves, who used traditional Names of God such as Ram, Hari, Prabhu and so on, but by the Bhatts whose panegyrics of the first five Gurus were included in the Adi Granth by Guru Arjan. After Bhatts, Bhai Gurdas used this sacred Name for God in his Vars and also by the authors, of the Janam Sakhis, See MK, 814. for 'Wah' and 'Wahiguru' Cf. S.S.Kohli, Philosophy of Guru Nanak, p.68.

109. Gauri, AG., 157.

110. Inge, Outspoken Essays, p.278.

111. The Kingdom of God within you, p.111, Cf.Coleridge: He prayeth best who loveth best. All things both great and small. (Ancient Mariner).

The universe has a macrocosmic or outer aspect which attracts and invites the loving attention of the perceiving man, and also a microcosmic or inner aspect which is the soul of the universe -- a matter for mystical apprehension. Shelley says that "it is impossible not to believe in the soul of the universe."[112] It is equally impossible for a true mystic poet not to express his pantheistic emotion in the poetry of Nature-mysticism. Guru Nanak has used innumberable metaphors symbolising his variegated perceptions of Nature with its myriad moods and tones, phases and nuances.

Like the mystic Carlyle, Guru Nanak regards Nature as a vast symbol of God. It is only in Nature, with all its beauty and mystery, that God can be truly recognized. Guru Nanak says:

> "Nanak the True Lord is the Supreme Giver and in Nature alone is He recognized." 113

COSMO-MYSTICAL REGIONS[114]

Nowhere is Guru Nanak so deeply mystical and sublime as when he describes the five cosmo-mystical Regions i.e.

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112. A.T. Strong, Studies in Shelley, p.10.

113. Var Majh, Pauri 8, AG, 141. (Nanak sach datar sanakhat gudarti). For Carlyle's view of Nature as a divine symbol, see Sartor Resartus, p.260. "The universe is but one vast symbol of God."

114. Mcleod calls these five mystical regions, 'realms'. See Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion, pp.221-24. Cf. G.S. Mansukhani, Guru Nanak World Teacher, p.62.

Khands, Dharam (Law), Gyan (Knowledge), Saram (Honour), Karam (Divine Grace) and Sachch (Truth)[115], towards the end of his most famous composition called Japji, Japji is decidedly his magnum opus and has been given the primal place in the whole of Adi Granth, while the five khands constitute the mystical climax of the whole piece.

The vertical evolutionary apothesis of these Regions has been regarded by Mcleod as (mystical) Ascent,[116] leading from Dharam Khand (Region of Law or duty) upward to the last, Sachch Khand which "is the ultimate climax of the search for truth, for it is here that there is perfect and absolute accord with the Divine Order (Hukam)."[117]

Though one can conceive an apparent similarity between these mystical regions and the Sufi maqamet or spiritual stages as has been suggested by Tara Chand, S.S. Kohli and Taran Singh,[118] for instance, yet, as Mcleod opines, the analogy does not hold good because the parallel is just conjectured and not based on any evidence. Sufis have

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115. Cf. My treatment of these Regions in Guru Nanak's Message in Japji, pp.90-104 (Chap. "The Five Regions"), in which I have given my original interpretation of the Saram Khand and the Karam Khand. Cf. also Mcleod, Loc.Cit. and Mohan Singh Uberoi, Sikh Mysticism, p.12 f.n.

116. Op.cit. p.221. For the phrase 'vertical evolution' see my work, op.cit., pp.93 f.

117. Ibid., p.223.

118. Cf. Influence of Islam on Indian Culture, p.176; A Critical Study of the Adi Granth, p.367, and Guru Nanak: Chintan te Kala (Panjabi), 2nd ed., p.89.

postulated either four or seven mystical stages[119] which have no cosmic reality or clear evolutionary process connecting them together, as we find in Guru Nanak.

The cosmic vision as expressed by Guru Nanak in strictly mystical terms and manner, is all his own. There is no exact or near parallel to it in all mystical literature. It is a part of his grandiose Nature-mysticism.

Whereas the highest Region i.e. Sachch Khand, is purely mystical in as much as Guru Nanak merely affirms its infinite existence and then testifies the colossal infinitude that surrounds the Formless One (Nirankar) who is the Godhead or the Nirgun Brahm, the second region Gyan Khand (the Region of Knowledge) is expressive of cosmological vastness to which he says, "there is no end" (Nanak ant na ant).[120]

What Marquette says of the Sufi stages of mystical ascent in respect of their supra-spatial genesis and reality also holds good in the case of these five Regions. He says: "These seven planes are not to be considered as localities in space but as grades of manifestations of the attributes in the manner of Plotinian hypostasis."[121]

Absolute vastness and infinitude are the key-notes

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119. For Sufi Cosmic planes, see Marquette, Introduction to Comparative Mysticism, pp. 175-76.

120. Japji, 35. AG., 7.

121. Op.cit., p.176.

of Guru Nanak's cosmogonic description as found in these Regions of which, to say any thing "is as hard as steel."[122] At another place in Japji, Guru Nanak Says: "There is no end to His creation."[123] About the cosmic causation, he says: "God created all the worlds by uttering the word. From this word flowed out millions of rivers (of life)."[124]

The description of the five Regions as a mystical system or plan to the highest level of cosmic infinitude -- almost an unravelling and unfolding of the exigencies of the Divine Order (Hukam) -- is perhaps Guru Nanak's deepest mystical study or sally into the unfathomable mystery of the Godhead, revealed to him in moments of contemplative rapture or intuitive inspiration. But what is most typical of Guru Nanak's mystical realization is not expression or description of what he had realized, as in the case of the delineation of the five Regions, but the candid affirmation of his inability to express the inexpressible.[125]

While implying that there is no numbering of the heavens as seven or eighteen thousand (as done by some Indian

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122. Japji, 37, AG.,8. Words within commas are Mcleod's translation of the line: "Nanak kathna karara sar." op.cit. p.224.

123. Japji, 24, AG., 5 (Ant na japai kita akar).

124. Japji, 16, AG., 3. (Kita pasao eko kavao. Tis te hoe lakh darivao).

125. For instance, Japji, 25, AG.,5. "His bounty is so much, it cannot be said." (Bahuta karam likhia na jai),

and Semitic religions[126] and saying that the heavens and the nether regions are countless,[127] he becomes suddenly conscious (as if, of blasphemy) and improves his statement by saying that even to say countless (asankh) would be unsavoury or wrong.[128]

Despite this idealistic tendency in Guru Nanak to affirm the impossibility of expressing the ineffable Reality and even to caution the braggarts of their folly in bragging,[129] his fortuitous description of the Cosmo-mystical Regions is a literary reality and can be said to have a few parallels in mystical literature such as Dante's Divine Comedy, Milton's Paradise Lost, Iqbal's Javaidnama and Bhai Vir Singh's Rana Surat Singh.[130] In all these divine Epics, having mystical themes and epic treatment, spiritual ascent has been imaginatively transposed with more or less mystical fecundity. But it can be safely aversed that whereas in other

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126. For the seven cosmic planes of the Sufis, see Encyclopedia of Islam, Vol.I (1960); Subhan, Sufism, pp.56-57. and Marquette, op.cit. p.176. For Buddhistic heavens, see Marquette, op.cit., pp.95-98.

127. Japji, 22, AG.,5. "Millions are the nether regions, millions are the heavenly spheres." (Patala patal lakh agasa agas.)

128. Japji, 19, AG.,4. "It is folly even to say (the word) countless (asankh)." (Asankh kahe sir bhar hoe).

129. Japji, 26, AG.,6. "If one bespeaks something out of limit or propriety, he will certainly be dubbed as the most foolish and vulgar among men." (Je ko akhai bol vigar. Ta likhiai sir gavara gavar).

130. Bhai Vir Singh's description of the cosmic plane, mystically conceived by him under the direct influence of Guru Nanak and other Sikh Gurus, comes closest to the cosmogenic vision expressed by Guru Nanak in his compositions especially in Japji's five cosmic Regions. See Rana Surat Singh (Panjabi), pp.22-34.

master poets describing cosmo-mystical realms, there is more poetic flight than mystical insight, in Guru Nanak there is more of mystical insight than of poetic invention.

HUKAM: DIVINE ORDER

"By Hukam all is created (but) Hukam cannot be said", says Guru Nanak.[131] This is a highly mystical statement.

Hukam represents the ineffable and absolute Divine power, which inevitably requires submission on the part of all the creation, especially the sentient human beings. It is in this context that Guru Nanak uses the word Hukam in the very first and primal statement he has made in Japji[132] regarding the basic spiritual problem before man as man viz-a-vis God as Hukam. He has also clearly laid down the solution of this 'spiritual problem' in submission 'Hukam rajai chalana) and continuous submission to the inexorable Will of God:

> "How to be truthful and how to break the wall of falsehood?
>
> Nanak says: By following the path of submission to the will of God as ordained in our very being."[133]

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131. Japji, 2, AG., 1.

132. After making the Credal Statement (Mul-mantar) in the beginning of Japji, Guru Nanak affirms the eternal nature of Godhead in a Slok, after which in the first Stanza (Pauri), he most cogently poses the question of the true human goal in the spiritual context, after rejecting the most prevalent means for the attainment of that goal. Then he declares, in mystical depth, his solution of the problem. It is thus his spiritual thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis.

133. Japji, 1, AG., 1.

Submission to the Will of God as a paramount human necessity is a cardinal Islamic concept. The word Hukam being of Arabic origin[134] has, in its religious context, Islamic connotation, though Guru Nanak, as we shall see, has used this mystical concept in a more elaborate sense than its original Islamic meaning of "submission" to the Divine Will or mashiat. In Islam, the word 'Islam' itself literally means 'submission' or 'the act of submission.'[135]

Guru Nanak has immensely developed his own concept of Hukam to mean, in the highest mystical sense, a Divine Order[136] or system (nizam) ordained for cosmogenical needs and processes of Divine Will, ultimately purporting to imply the Omnipotent Divinity itself. It is as if the Absolute Being has converted Himself into an operative or creative principle, which being representative of Divine Will and power, has been appropriately designated as Hukam. Nothing is outside the purview of this Hukam, as nothing is beyond the power or domain of God Almighty. Guru Nanak says: "Every body is under the sway of Divine Order; no one is out of its domain."[137]

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134. Cf. Bhai Vir Singh, Santhia Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Vol. 1, 51. S. S. Kohli, Outlines of Sikh Thought, p. 56 and G. S. Talib Guru Nanak: His Personality and Vision, p. 144. Cf. also Kala Singh Bedi, Guru Nanak Nirankari, Appendix 4, p. 114.

135. Cf. Schuon, Understanding Islam, p. 15 and Encyclopedia of Islam.

136. W. H. Mcleod (op. cit.) p. 199, S. S. Kohli, (op. cit. p. 56), and J. S. Grewal (Guru Nanak to Maharaja Ranjit Singh, p. 3) have translated Hukam as Divine Order, G. S. Talib calls it Ordinance in the mystical sense. op. cit., p. 144. n. Cf. Kala Singh Bedi, Guru Nanak Nirankari, Appendix 4, p. 114. He calls Hukam, Divine constitution (ishavari vidhan).

137. Japji, 2, AG., 1.

Clarifying the meaning of the concept of Hukam as postulated by Guru Nanak, Mcleod says:

> "Hukam has usually been translated as 'Will'. This is a literal translation, but it is unsuitable in the context of Guru Nanak's usage, for it fails to convey his precise meaning and is liable to be equated with the Islamic doctrine of the Will of God. In the thought of Guru Nanak, the Hukam signifies the divinely instituted and maintained principle governing the existence and movement of the Universe. It is a constant principle and to the extent to which it can be comprehended it functions according to a predictable pattern. This regularity and this consistency distinguish it from the Islamic concept." 138

This systematic and orderly principle of Hukam, as devised by Guru Nanak, is, accordingly, a broad-based and universally-operative concept and not any sporadic or particularized submission to divine Will. Mcleod brings out this distinction in very lucid words: "In Islam the divine Will, if not actually capricious is at least 'unpledged', whereas the Hukam of Guru Nanak's usage is definitely pledged and dependable."[139] Again: "The divine Order, the Hukam, is accordingly an all-embracing principle, the sum total of all divinely-instituted laws; and it is a revelation of the nature of God."[140]

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138. Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion, p. 201.

139. Loc. Cit., Mcleod has laid special emphasis on the creational aspect of Hukam, instead of the ordaining one. "According to Guru Nanak God has revealed His Truth in creation and specially in Hukam which orders creation." op.cit., p.204.

140. Ibid., p. 203.

Similarly, S.S.Kohli remarks: "This Hukam is an over-all Order of the Lord. This Order is a set of commandments or a set of the Laws of God. These laws are true for all times and work in all the three fields i.e.physical, moral and spiritual."[141]

Hukam, Thus considered, is no ordinary religious doctrine or theological concept in Guru Nanak. It has the deepest mystical ramifications, equating its recondite meaning with the divine mystery itself. It is the very cornerstone of Sikh mysticism. "The concept of Hukam" says J.S.Grewal "is basic to the thought of Guru Nanak."[142]

Hukam is fundamentally denotive of the transcendence, infinitude and absoluteness of God, as Bhai Vir Singh, the famed Sikh divine, says: "All creatures are within measure, the Ordainer of the Hukam is measureless. As the creatures are bound in the limits of Time and Space, their orders are accordingly limited. The True Being is beyond Time, Space and Causation and, thus, His Order is also absolute. The Hukam is identical with the True Being (Satya-Sarup) Himself."[143] He has further explained Hukam to mean that "it is that eternal state of Divine consciousness from which the creation and preservation of the universe take place. This Hukam can

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141. Outlines of Sikh Thought, p.56.

142. Guru Nanak in History, p. 245.

143. Santhia Sri Guru Granth Sahib (Panjabi), Vol.1, 48.

be variously translated as Will, Law or Sabad (i.e. Logos) but whatever it is, it has no correspondence or relationship with the will, law, sabad or order of the ordinary human connotation."[144]

In Guru Nanak, Hukam has also been called Bhana, which term is nearer to the meaning of Hukam as conceived in Islam, i.e. the divine Will.[145] The Word Raza (or the Panjabi form Raja, as used by Guru Nanak) has also been synonymously used with Hukam but it has a slightly different meaning, in the sense of 'what pleases God'.[146] Another Persian equivalent of Hukam, i.e. Furman, has also been frequently used by the Gurus.[147]

Mohan Singh Dewana, a mystic himself, includes Hukam Yoga among the Seven-fold-Yoga of Sikh Mysticism conceived by him. He defines Hukam Yoga as: "Uniting with the Lord through acceptance of whatsoever happens under His Order-Will (hukam-riza)."[148]

"According to Sufi teaching", says Subhan, "the entire creation belongs either to the Alam-i-Amr, the World of Command or the Alam-i-Khalq, the World of creation."[149]

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144. Ibid., p.51.

145. S.S.Kohli, op.cit.,56, Cf.J.S.Grewal, Guru Nanak in History, p.246 f.

146. Cf. J.S.Grewal, op.cit., 248.

147. Cf. G.S.Talib, op.cit.,p.144. Guru Nanak: Var Asa, Slok, AG., 463. "True Your Hukam, true Furman". (Sacha tera hukam sacha furman).

148. Sikh Mysticism, p.15.

149. Sufism, p.61. Cf. G.S.Talib, op.cit., p.144 n.

Guru Nanak's concept of Hukam, in its highly developed meaning, seems to combine both these Sufi worlds and even goes beyond to the mystical realms of the inscrutable Divine mystery. The word Amr has also been used by Guru Nanak to denote Divine power and command: "True Your command (Amr) true Your court (diban)"[150]

Guru Nanak's concept of Hukam, in the sense of submission and resignation (i.e. Hukam-Raza-Amr-Bhana complex) also implies the willing acceptance of suffering (dukh) affliction, even martyrdom (shahadat or shahidi) for the sake of conformity to the Divine Will.[151] The basic principle involved in this idea of supreme human sacrifice or martyrdom, for the sake of Benevolent God (who is dreadful or Qahir -- in Islam the words used are Qahar and Jabar -- only when there is utter non-conformance of His Hukam) is the all-saving mystic faith that all that God ordains or does is good and acceptable. This is not mere stoicism or vairag (state of dispassion) but a positive, heroic feeling of living and dying absolutely within God.[152] The willing acceptance of Bhana (Divine pleasure) is typically embodied in Guru Arjan's affirmative lines:

"Sweet is thy Ordinance:
Nanak begs only for the wealth of the Name."[153]

Guru Nanak strongly inculcates the acceptance of

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150. Var Asa, slok, AG., 463. (Sacha tera amar sacha diban).

151. Cf. G. S. Talib, op.cit., p. 145.

152. Ibid., p. 146.

153. Asa, AG., 394. (Tera Bhana mithha lagai, Har Nam padarath Nanak magai).

all suffering out of love for the True Name:

"Let there be hunger for the True Name, in our soul.
In that hunger or craving, let us bear all suffering."[154]

Has he not laid down, as the greatest mystic principle of spiritual life, the dictum viz. to remember God is to live, to forget Him is to die? In his own words: When I utter His Name, I live, when I forget it, I die."[155] From this inexorable dependence upon God and His Name stems the logicality of the postulate of Hukam.

Manifestation of Hukam in Guru Nanak's thought has thus many facets and implications, which are prodominantly of a mystical nature. To him there is no alternative but to accept Hukam-Raza.

"There is no other place of refuge accept you O,Lord.
Whatever happens is all your (sweet) will."[156]

The Absolute God necessarily works through his manifestatively-tangible principle of Hukam -- this is his Divine-mystical arrangement:

"The Lord of the Hukam directs the whole path with
the help of His Hukam

Nanak says, He, the Disdainful, is ever in the state
of bliss." 157

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154. Asa, AG., 9.

155. Loc.Cit.

156. Gauri, AG, 151. (Tudh bin duji nahi jai. Jo kichh vartai sabh teri rajai).

157. Japji 3, AG., 2.(Hukami hukam chalai rahu. Nanak vigse veparvahu)

To understand this Hukam is to learn humility. One who understand or realizes Hukam cannot be vain. The Guru concludes in the same hymn:

"Nanak, if one understands the Divine Order,
then he will not utter (the words of) vanity
or selfhood."

Elimination of selfhood (Haumai) is the foremost condition for t he disciple (Sikh) to adopt and observe and this is possible only if he accepts the Hukam. In fact, according to Guru Nanak no Sikh becomes a sikh until and unless he accepts Hukam by shunning his love of self (haumai). Both cannot go together. If there is God's Hukam there is no human self and vice-versa. Human personality in Guru Nanak's view, can only develop, in the true sense, within the purview and operative acceptance of Hukam.

Hukam in its comprehensive conceptual meaning encompasses the whole gamut of divine manifestation in the form of cosmogonic creation and its organisational control and dispensation. Guru Nanak has explicitly referred to this ubiquitons nature of Hukam in one of his exquisite hymns:[158]

"The true gain is rarely given to a man, Only the perfect Guru can make this happen. If one be Guru-oriented, he will understand Hukam and by accepting it will get immersed in it. By Hukam this created universe is visible. By Hukam, are (created) the heavens, the earth and the underworld and by Hukam these are placed in order. By Hukam the mythical ox carries the earth on its head. By Hukam are (created) the air, the water and the space. By Hukam the spirit lives in the house of maya and by

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158. Maru Solhe, Ag., 1036-37.

Hukam the universe is in play. By Hukam the firmament has been spread. By Hukam the oceans, the land and the three worlds are made. By Hukam is the breath of life and the sustaining food; and by Hukam the world is visibly perceived. By Hukam the ten avatars were created. Besides these, countless categories of angels and demons were created. One who accepts the Hukam, is honoured in God's portal and God immerses such a man in His True abode. By Hukam thirty six aeons passed (in chaos). By Hukam the Siddhas and the ascetics attained contemplation. Lord is the Master and all are under His control; those whom He blesses, get salvation."

The concept of Hukam has two levels on which it is properly and rightly understood. On the Divine level it is manifestation of Divine Omnipotence expressed in terms of Divine Order or Will, while on the human level it is the submissive acceptance and humble resignation to this Inscrutable-Ineffable Divine providence. A necessary correlation and synthesis is needed for the ultimate understanding of Hukam. But the Guru requires more than that. He requires actual conformity in action and practice to this basic spiritual principle. He says, as his final preaching:

"He does what pleases Him -- and who can question His doings?

That Lord who is the king of kings, is the Master; Nanak, oet us remain in his Raza (Will)." 159

NAM: DIVINE NAME

There is so much emphasis on Nam in the Adi Granth or in Sikhism and, for that matter, in the mystical philosophy of Guru Nanak, that it can safely be averred that Guru Nanak's

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159. Japji, 27, AG. 6. (Jo kichh bhavai soi karsi hukam na karna jai. So patsah saha patsahib Nanak rahan rajai).

mysticism is the 'Mysticism of Nam! It is not only the chief instrument or method for the attainment of salvation, but also the paramount mystic ground upon which Guru Nanak's theological edifice stands.

A recent study of Guru Nanak affirms that "constant reflection upon the Divine Name, like that upon the Word, is the most competent and popular means in the mysticism of Guru Nanak."[160]

Another notable writer on Sikhism remarks: "Three things stand out pre-eminently (in the message of Guru Nanak): The One True Lord, the Guru and the Name. Salvation lay in the Word of God and the Word could only be known under the Guru's instruction."[161]

Nam is the "spiritual discipline" that leads to ultimate Mukti or salvation; it is the "Yoga of the Name" (or "Nam Yoga").[162] Mohan Singh Uberoi calls it "Nama Simran Yoga" which he has defined as "unification of the seeker with God through a repetition of a Name or Names of Him."[163] He adds: "The repeated Utterance of the Names of God is the only approach available to us to contact Him, who is unknowable and invisible. A name is a pointer to certain qualities

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160. Darshan Singh, Religion of Guru Nanak, p.60.

161. I.Banerjee, Evolution of the Khalsa, p.112. (words within the parentheses have been added).

162. Gopal Singh, Religion of the Sikhs, p.54.

163. Sikh Mysticism: The Sevenfold Yoga of Sikhism, p.3. Cf. S.S.Kohli, Philosophy of Guru Nanak, p.71. and G.S. Mansukhani, Guru Nanak World Teacher, p.81 ff.

inherent and operant in the one named ... Recitation of His names and singing of His praises become more effective if executed in a congregation and performed with the accompaniment of music."[164]

Nam, so far as it characterizes God[165] and provides means or "mystic discipline"[166] for His attainment, is thus the most significant concept in Guru Nanak. "The Name of God is the immediate certainty of security, continuity, completeness, fearlessness, which together constitute the privileges of the status of full loving."[167]

Nam is not just mechanical, parrot-like repetition of a particular name of God, however, exalted and sacred it may be; it is, in fact, "the realization of God's essence within the core of one's being: it is self-consciousness merging imperceptibly and effortlessly into the state of the Super-conscious (Sahj-Samadhi)".[168] It is, thus, the very principle of Divine Truth revealed in the inmost (mystical) self of a man. "The Name indeed is God's revelation through which He can be known."[169]

Guru Nanak himself did not derive the concept of Nam from the scriptures of earlier religions of their religious

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164. Ibid., p.6.
165. Ibid., p.20.
166. Ibid., p.15.
167. Ibid., p.53.
168. Gopal Singh, op.cit., p.57.
169. J.S.Grewal, Guru Nanak in History, p.238.

thought, but directly imbibed it in his own mystical experience as a most fundamental truth revealed to him "Instead of drawing authority and inspiration", says A.C.Banerjee, "from any revealed scripture, he (Guru Nanak) depends upon his own mystical experience to explain the nature of truth and the 'true way' which leads to salvation."[170]

Bhai Gurdas, who knew Guru Nanak at the closest spiritual quarters, says that Guru Nanak received directly from God Almighty who called him to His presence in the Sachch Khand (the Highest Heaven),[171] two special gifts as divine Grace, viz. Nam and Garibi (humility):

> "The venerable Guru was honoured in God's True Abode (Sachch Khand) and received the priceless Name and Humility." 172

Etymologically derived from Sanskrit, the word Nam literally means 'to remember','to tend to', and 'to address to'.[173] The word Nam also belongs identically to Persian, with the same connotation.[174] In common usage it means 'a word constituting the distinctive designation of a person or a thing' and also 'spiritual nature or essence'.[175]

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170. Guru Nanak and His Times, p.149.

171. Cf. Janam Sakhi accounts of Guru Nanak's ascent to Sachch Khand, when he suddenly disappeared in river Veiyn at Sultanpur. Puratan Janam Sakhi ed. Bhai Vir Singh, p.16.

172. Var 1, 24. (Baba paidha sachch khand nauniddh nam garibi pai).

173. Cf. Bhai Vir Singh, Santhia Pothi, 1, p. 13.

174. MK. 522, In Bible, Nam has its equivalent in Word.

175. Webster's seventh New Collegiate Dictionary. Cf. Jodh Singh, Gurmat Nirnai, p.176.

In technical religious parlance, based on Gurbani (i.e. Adi Granth), "Nam is a spiritual principle which beginning with the quest of a seeker after God, and comprising the initial recitative process (Jap), leads on to the ultimate union with God."[176]

The Name is not, however, a mere word or a group of letters; 'it is a vital force'.[177] It aids immensely in the spiritual progress of a disciple. "It aids the understand -ing of the Divine Reality. It enjoins self-analysis and self-control."[178]

Sher Singh remarks that Nam is not mere reflection or meditation. It means the moulding of the whole personality. It affects all activities of our life.[179] He even associates the principle of aesthetic perception with Name: "In short Nam is the sympathetic and aesthetic communion of man with man and environments. Love and aesthetic appreciation form its basis."[180]

Nam, according to Bhai Jodh Singh, denotes "a universal power which becoming immanent infuses all sensient beings."[181]

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176. Bhai Vir Singh, Santhia Pothi, 1, p.15. Cf. Teja Singh, Essays in Sikhism, p.43 n. He compares this term to logos of Greek mystical philosophy.

177. S. S. Kohli, Philosophy of Guru Nanak, p.68.

178. G. S. Mansukhani, op.cit., p.77.

179. Philosophy of Sikhism, p.287.

180. Ibid., p.294.

181. Gurmat Nirnai, p.177.

Having as it does infinite ramifications, it is nearly impossible to define Nam: it is as comprehensive and unlimited as God Himself who created Nam and Sabad (Word) with Guru as the manifest agent, in order to save and uplift the ignorant and maya-engrossed humanity. In this sense, Nam is the fulfilment of the Divine Will as revealed and manifested in Guru Nanak's concept of Hukam.

The Name and the Word (i.e. Nam and Sabad) are most often used as synonyms in Guru Nanak's works (in fact, in all Adi-Granth). It is hard to distinguish between them. Mcleod says that whereas "the Word appears as the medium of communication", the Name appears "as the object of communication."[182] Again: "Almost invariably Truth as mediated by the Guru is referred to as the Word, whereas Truth as received and mediated on by the believer, tends to be expressed in terms of the Name."[183]

J. S. Grewal[184] remarks while discussing the relative position of Nam and Sabad: "More clearly than the Name, the

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182. Op.cit., p. 195. Cf. J. S. Grewal, From Guru Nanak to Mahraja Ranjit Singh, p. 3. "The Name refers to the object of communication and the Word to the medium of communication."

183. Op.cit., p. 196. Mcleod concludes thus: "The Name is the total expression of all that God is and this is Truth. Sati Nam -- His Name is Truth Meditate on this and you will be save." (Loc. Cit.).

184. Guru Nanak in History, p. 239.

Word is the vehicle of God's revelation:

> He has no form, colour or material sign;
> He is revealed through the true Sabad."[185]

Actually speaking, the Word is the manifest form of the Name. Word is something concrete and tangible, either spoken or written, in terms of meaningful language, while Name is conceptual, subject of contemplation and mediation. Both are the outer and the inner aspects of the same mystical divine Truth.

The greatest thought, says a writer,[186] in Guru Nanak's works is the concept of Nam, which is not mere utterance and repetition of a holy name, but is truthful actualization of living in the Name. "Nam", says Taran Singh, "is the sublimest image of God, by reciting which one can find Him. Nam is the meditation of God."[187]

Recitation of Nam has many ways and forms, viz. reciting with tongue, reciting in the mind, unuttered, and reciting in the sub-conscious mind, which last is called ajapa-jap or 'effortless recitation'. This is the highest form of meditation of the Name.[188] There comes an advanced stage when "the Name is uttered by every pore of the body."[189] Addressing the Siddhas, Guru Nanak says: "The Guru-faced one

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185. Sorath, AG., 597., quoted in Loc.Cit.
186. S.R.Bahri, Nanak Bani Vich Falsfa (Panjabi), pp. 22 f.
187. Guru Nanak: Chintan te Kala (Panjabi), p.186.
188. Cf.Darshan Singh, Religion of Guru Nanak, pp.126 f.
189. S.S.Kohli, Outlines of Sikh Thought, p.98.

remembers God through every pore of his body."[190]

In Guru Nanak's own words, Nam has manifold religious manifestations specially in its soul-elevating and ethical aspects. To cite the relevant lines from Japji, his best work:"[191]

1. "His Name is True". (Mul-Mantar).
2. "The True Lord with True Name". (Stanza 4).
3. "In the ambrosial early morning hours, ponder on the true Name and its greatness." (Stanza 5).
4. "By hearing the Name of God and His praise ..." (Stanzas 8-11).
5. "Such is the (power of the) immaculate Name, If only one knows it in his heart of heart." (Stanzas 12-15).
6. "Through letters is the Name and the Praise of God." (Stanza 19).
7. "There is no place where His Name is not." (Stanza 19).
8. "If the reason is putrified by the force of sins, it can be cleaned by constant recitation of the Name."(Stanza 20).
9. "Great is the Lord, great His Name, all creation is His." (Stanza 21).
10. "Great is the Lord and lofty His abode; still more lofty is His Holy Name." (Stanza 24).
11. "Those who remembered His Name, got their efforts rewarded. (Epilogue).

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190. Siddh Gosht, 27, AG., 941. (Gurmukh rom rom har dhiavai).

A few more examples from Guru Nanak's other compositions may be added:

"The world is fire, God's Name is soothing."[192]

... ...

"He alone is educated and a wise pundit, who followed
... ... the path of the Name."[193]

"Nanak, without True Name all honour is lost."[194]

... ...

"Half a grain is the sparrow's feed; it goes up to skies wailing.

"That sparrow is good and liked by the Lord, if it utters Lord, Lord." 195

... ...

"Nanak, without True Name, no body's hunger is appeased." 196

... ...

"O Creator! Thou art my benefactor -- Only one gift I ask of thee; Give me thy Name." 197

... ...

"Nanak, without True Name, all is futile."[198]

... ...

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192. Var Malar, Slok, AG., 1291. (Atas duniya khunak nam khudaia).

193. Ibid., AG., 1288 (So paria so pandit bina jini kamana nao).

194. Ibid., AG., 1287. (Nanak sache nam bin sir khur pat pati).

195. Loc.Cit. (Adh gula chiri ka chugan gain chari bilalai. Khasme bhave oha changi je kari khudai khudai).

196. Loc.Cit. (Nanak sache nam bin kisai na lathhi bhukh).

197. Parbhati, AG., 1329. (Karta tu mera jajman. Ik dakhna hau tai pah magau deh apna nam).

198. Var Majh, AG., 142. (Nanak sache nam bin sabhe tol vinas).

"Nanak, True Name's praise cannot be said."[199]

... ...

"Without Name, life is a curse."[200]

... ...

"Sorrow is poison, its remedy God's Name."[201]

... ...

"Renounce hypocrisy (O Brahman!). Recite the Name and you will be saved." 202

... ...

"Thine Name is Formless One, by reciting Thy Name we will not go to hell. 203.

... ...

"Defaults and faults are assessed in Thine court. How can one be good without Name." 204

... ...

"In the house of Nanak, there is only Name."[205]

... ...

Summing up we can say that Guru Nanak's concept of Nam, in its cosmogenic and creational aspect, is synonymous with Hukam and thus represents the Divine purpose and scheme of things in putting forth the universe. All that is created is

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199. Ibid., AG.,148. (Nanak sache nam ki keti purhha puchh).

200. Ibid., AG.,148. (Bin navai dhrig vas phit so jivia).

201. Malar, AG.,1257. (Dukhh mauhra maran har nam).

202. Var Asa,AG.,471.(Chhodile pakhanda,Nai laivai jai taranda).

203. Ibid.,AG.,465. (Nao tera nirankar hai, nai laivai narak na jaivai).

204. Parbhati, AG., 1330.(Bhul chuk terai darbar. Nam bina kaise achar).

205. Guru Arjan, Bhairo, AG., 1136. (Nanak ke ghar keval nam).

within the power of Nam. In Guru Nanak, this view is quite manifest:

> "Whatever He has created, is (the manifestation of) His Name .
> There is no place or object, where His Name is not."[206]

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206. Japji, 19. AG., (Jeta kita teta nao. Vin navai nahi ko thao). Cf. Guru Arjan, Sukhmani, 16, AG.,284. "By Name are created all the beings. By Name are created the worlds and the whole universe." (Nam ke dhare sagale jant. Nam ke dhare khand brahmand). Cf. Jairam Mishr, Guru Nanak Dev Jiwan Aur Darshan (Hindi), p. 294.

CHAPTER VI

MYSTICAL CONCEPTS OF GURU NANAK - II

THE MYSTIC PATH: SOUL MYSTICISM

Mysticism is no wishful thinking or pious idealization. It is translating into action what one has learnt of truth in his higher feeling and thought. It is not even mere contemplation, however, sacred it may be, It is, rather, an actualization, in fact a nd practice, of the spiritual element inherent in man. It is an emprical objectification of the mystic truth perceived intuitively.

Sikh mysticism, which is another name for Guru Nanak's mysticism, is no exception to this mystical operationalism. In fact, Sikh mysticism is specially rich in this synthesizing of inner and outer aspects of religion, It includes both the mystic ground and the mystic path as essential features of its highest development.

An eminent writer defining Sikh mysticism says:

> "(Sikh) Mysticism is the indispensable whole-man, whole-time adventure in identity, in the recovery (in purified, infinitely extended awareness) of the Absolute Unity of God's Person, which awareness is exclusive of all sense of duality, diversity, of every idea, even, which is non-God." 1

This mystic ground or ideal has to be achieved in actual practice. Hence the imperative need for t he mystic discipline or the mystic path. The God-mysticism which we discussed in the last chapter, has to be correlated with Soul-mysticism. The human soul cries out for identity with

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1. Mohan Singh Uberoi, Sikh Mysticism, p.43.

the divine soul, as "deep calls unto deep."[2] The 'path' is as important as the goal itself because it provides a link and a meeting-point between God as such and man as such.[3]

The process of self-discipline is called the 'way'. It is the Chinese 'Tao', the Buddhistic 'Dhyanam' and the 'Tariqat' of the Sufis. In Sikh mysticism it is all-important because Sikhism means 'discipleship' or discipline itself.

The general mystic method, similar in the mystics of all races and all faiths and as systematized by Christian authors, following Greek philosophic thought, is as under:-

1. The Purgative way.
2. The Illuminative.
3. The contemplative.

The first is purification of sensual and sensuous interests and propensities; the second is the enlightenment of consciousness; and the third denotes "the union between the mystic subject and the divine object of his quest."[4]

In order that human soul be rid of its impurities and evil propensities, a way of inner discipline has to be discovered and followed. The term Yoga is commonly used

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2. "Abyssus invocat abyssum." Otto, Mysticism East and West, p. 254.

3. Cf. Schuon, Understanding Islam, p.13.

4. Marquette, Introduction to Comparative Mysticism, p.26. Cf. The Indian mystic path consists of four stages viz. sāravan (hearing), manan (reflection), nidhyasan (meditation) and sakhyatkar (identification), Rattan Singh Jaggi, Gurbani Tika Anand Ghan, Tika Japji, Pauri 25. quoted in Taran Singh, art. "Anand Ghan", Gur Sandesh, ed. Narinder Singh Soch, Feb.,1973, p.19.

in Indian mysticism for such mystic discipline which may lead to union with the Supreme Being. Plato says:

> "There will always be evil in this nether world; but one effort is imperative; as quickly as possible to forsake this lower world for the higher. This evasion is achieved by assimilating oneself to God in the measure of the possible and assimilation is attained by becoming just and holy in the charity of the spirit." 5

"The human mind", wherein such inner discipline has to take place "is the meeting place of the Nous and the Psyche, while the apex of the soul is in Nous, its lowest part is in Psyche, directed towards separation and objectivity."[6]

Knowledge of the Self, in the form of "methodical cultivation" (a term used by William James[7] to denote via-mystica), is a paramount necessity in order to reach and assimilate divine consciousness. As mentioned earlier, Yoga which has many variations and types, comes very handy as a way of spiritual discipline. "In India, training in mystical insight has been known from time immemorial under the name of Yoga. Yoga means the experimental union of the individual with the divine."[8]

Sikh mysticism has been variously named as Nam Yoga,

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5. Ibid., p.118.
6. Ibid., p.121. The Nous stands for 'spirit' and Psyche for 'mind'.
7. Varieties of Religious Experience, p.314.
8. Loc. Cit.,

Bhakti yoga, Shabad-Surat Yoga and Sahaj Yoga.[9] A writer has gone even further to call it "Sevenfold Yoga".[10] These terms to denote Guru Nanak's mystical path have been only recently discovered and applied to his way of realization; he himself did not adopt any form of Yoga from among the traditional types, to match his mystical teaching, though he adopted yogic terminology in order to clarify the true meaning underlying the concept of Yoga.

Guru Nanak did not need any traditional arche-types from Indian mysticism to fit in with his own original mystical realization, because he inculcated original ways and measures to attain the truth originally conceived.

An eminent scholar expatiating on Guru Nanak's originality of teaching and message, recently observed:

> "Guru Nanak was not a reformer. We know he was not a Hindu who appealed to the Hindu scriptures in order to reform Hindu society. We know he was not a Muslim trying to eradicate evils in Muslim society by appealing to the Quran. I do not find in his teachings any attempt at a reconciliation of Hinduism and Islam, any combination of existing patterns of beliefs to constitute a new and more pleasing pattern. In fact, he set both Hinduism and Islam aside to get to the religion itself. He was an originator, a founder." 11

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9. Cf. G.S.Mansukhani, Guru Nanak World Teacher, p.84; S.S. Kohli, Philosophy of Guru Nanak, pp.70 f.; Darshan Singh, Religion of Guru Nanak, pp.121-23, and G.S.Talib, Guru Nanak: His Personality and Vision, pp.197 ff.

10. Mohan Singh Uberoi, Sikh Mysticism, pp.3,4 and 15. According to Uberoi the Sevenfold Yoga of Sikh Mysticism comprises: (1) Guru-Chela Yoga, (2) Name-Simran Yoga, (3) Kirtana Yoga, (4) Sahaja Yoga, (5) Hukam Yoga, (6) Qudrat Yoga, and (7) Jivana Yoga.

11. M.Mujeeb, art. "Relevance of Guru Nanak's Teachings", Guru Nanak University News (November, 1969) quoted in J.S.Grewal, From Guru Nanak to Maharaja Ranjit Singh, p.26.

Guru Nanak did not postulate or establish any philosophical system or inherit any theological tradition such as Vedanta or Yoga or even Bhakti way of realization, because he was a mystic in his own right and devised his original theism with corresponding original 'method' or 'path' of attaining to Reality. A writer points out that Sikhism is not primarily a philosophical system.[12] Guru Nanak in his religious perception attached no value to "pedantic philosophy", as Teja Singh observes,[13] and went direct to the mystical sources of religious impulse as well as to the true empirical ways of approach to truth.

Guru Nanak's path, in its final meaning and analysis, is the path of love and may be appropriately called Love Mysticism. As Love requires first purging of all that is anti-love and then adopting all that is conducive to love, Guru Nanak begins with purging in the form of renunciation and restraint to be correspondingly matched with positive affirmation in the form of submission to the divine order or Hukam. These are the two basic principles simultaneously operative in Guru Nanak's mysticism.

Goethe says: "Thou shalt renounce, renounce. This is the eternal song which every hour hoarsely sings."[14] About love, Fichte remarks: "Man can will nothing but what he loves, his love is the sole, and at the same time the infallible

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12. A. C. Banerjee, Guru Nanak and His Times, p. 149. Cf. Gopal Singh, Religion of the Sikhs, p. 30.

13. Essays in Sikhism, p. 10.

14. Quoted in Inge, Mysticism in Religion, p. 102.

spring, of his volition and of all his life's striving and movement."[15]

Guru Angad (the second Sikh Guru) reveals this universal truth of purging followed by assimilation in cryptic language: "A thing will go into another, if the other is emptied of what is inside it."[16] It implies so forcefully that the inception of God's reality in the human heart would depend upon the purging from it of all that is non-God.

Guru Nanak emphasizes this important truth, by using the apt metaphors of 'milk' and the 'utensil': "First wash the utensil and carefully purge it of all infected smell, then only think of pouring milk into it."[17] The clear connotation of this statement would be to clean the mind before receiving God's Name into it.

Perhaps there is no clearer statement in Guru Nanak's works on the subject of determining the true 'path' that will lead to the realization of truth(of course, the path inculcated is not for intellectual rumination, but for mystical perception and volitional impact) than the following complete Slok in Asa-di-Var:

> 'Truth will be known if the True Lord lives in the heart.
> By removing the dirt of falsehood, it will wash all impurity from the body.
> Truth will be known if one loves the Truth.
> By hearing the Name, the mind becomes enthused and thus emancipated.
> Truth will be known if one knows the true way of life.

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15. Quoted in Ramanand to Ram Tirath, (G.A.Nateson), p.12.
16. Var Asa, Slok, AG., 474.
17. Suhi, AG., 728.

Preparing the field of self, the seed of the
creator is sown in it.
Truth will be known if one receives the true
instruction;
And if one shows mercy to all living beings and
is charitable to the needy.
Truth will be known if one stays at the sanctuary
of the spirit.
And by getting instruction from the Guru, he lives
in peace.
Truth is the remedy for all men who can wash out
all evil with its help.
Nanak says, true are those who possess Truth in
their hearts." 18

The Guru clearly defines in this luminous hymn the nature of mystic path by following which a believer can perceive truth in his heart and soul. But this is possible only with the help of the Guru. Guru is the inevitable mediator between man and God.

In Guru Nanak's mysticism, the place of the Guru is primal and paramount. The Guru occupies the highest place of pride in the heirarchy of divine beings nearest to God.

One who has reached the goal, can show the path. The Guru is thus indispenseable. Many profess to know the truth but few actually know it, because it is only through the grace of the Guru (Gur-prasad) that God is realized.[19] To quote an except from Aldous Huxley:

> St. Francois de Sales used to say, "I hear of nothing but perfection on every side, so far as talk goes; but I see very few people who really practice it. Everybody has his own notion of perfection ... For my part the only perfection I know of is a hearty love of God

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18. Var Asa, Slok, AG., 468.

19. Japji, Mul-mantar (Prologue). Cf. Jairam Mishr, Guru Nanak Dev Jiwan Aur Darshan (Hindi), p. 291.

> and to love one's neighbour as oneself. Charity is the only virtue which rightly unites us to God and man. Such union is our final aim and end, and all the rest is mere delusion." Jean Pierre Camus. 20

The mystic path or discipline (Sadhana) which is totally dependent on the agency of the Guru, involves, thus, the certain need of the Guru and the Sabad which he mediates in his grace and charity, and then the insight which flows from his instruction leading ultimately to union with God. in the highest mystical state called Sahaj, in which the individual soul or self is absorbed into the all-embracing beatitude of divine presence.

But the Guru is not merely a path-finder or a guide in the ordinary sense. He is a Perfect Being himself and always reminds in his holy person, the ultimate goal eternally posited before man. This goal should never be lost sight of because the path is only an indication or a symbolical motivation. The mystic poet Ghalab says:

> "Our cherished goal is beyond the domain of comprehension.
>
> Men of insight regard the Qibla (i.e. goal) as only indicative of the Qibla." 21

The goal, according to Guru Nanak, is the mystical rapport with God. As a writer on Guru Nanak observes:

"Mysticism of Guru Nanak strives to gain the direct realization of the oneness of all the things and ultimately

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20. Perennial Philosophy, p.314.

21. Diwan-i-Urdu: "Hai pare sarhad-i-idrak se apna masjud. Qibla ko ahle nazar qibla-numa kahte hain."

to merge into the one Supreme Reality. It is an act of purification and a way of identifying oneself with that Reality."[22]

The Goal and the Path, both are in the custody of the Guru, who, according to Guru Nanak, is like the 'eternal ship' in the measureless ocean of Truth:

"The mind is overladen with the heavy burden of sin.
How can one cross the ocean of life?
The True Guru is the eternal ship which saves
with the help of God's Name." 23

THE GURU AND SABAD.

The Guru is fundamentally a mystic and the path he shows is the mystic path. "Sikhism", it has been said, "cannot be understood as a system of philosophy, but as a way of life, as a mystic rather than a metaphysical path."[24] The Guru keeps strictly to the fundamental aspects of life and truth leaving out the unnecessary details.[25] This was specially true of Guru Nanak.

Three things stand out pre-eminently in Sikhism, as a writer has pointed out, viz. The one True Lord, the

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22. Darshan Singh, Religion of Guru Nanak, p. 54. Cf. Four types of salvation (mukti) viz. salokya, samipya, sarupya, sayojya. Rattan Singh Jaggi, Gurbani Tike Anand Ghan, Tika Japji, Pauri 26. quoted in Taran Singh, art "Anand Ghan", Gur Sandesh, Feb. 1973, p. 20.

23. Maru, AG., 1029. (Mastak bhar kalar sir bhara. Keonkar bhavjal langhas para. Satgur bohith adi jugadi ram nam nistara he.)

24. Gopal Singh, Religion of the Sikhs, p. 30.

25. Cf. I. Banerjee, Evolution of the Khalsa, p. 147.

Guru, and the Name.[26] And it may be added very pertinently that the Guru combines all the three in his mystic person. The True Lord and the Guru are, ultimately speaking, one spiritual entity and the Name flows out of this mystical fount as an act of grace.

Guru is the pivotal figure in Guru Nanak's mysticism. His whole teaching revolves round the Guru's mystical person. A very recent study has shown that "Even in Guru Nanak's time a mystical and impersonal character was attached to the Gurushiip. The circumstances connected with the nomination of Guru Angad as his successor brought into clear prominence the idea that the Guru constituted a single personality, succession implying only a change of the mortal image but not of the spirit."[27] This masterly and final act of Guru Nanak's mystical transfiguration, in the form of a perpetuated Gurushiip, has been called the 'key-event'[28] of his life.

The concept of the Guru is not merely a theoretical one, but forms an active, dynamic principle which has worked effectively for five centuries in the development of Sikh mysticism and theism. Guru Nanak himself in his own person epitomized the whole concept of the Guru. This active principle may be compared to the "catholic doctrine of the church as Christ's Mystical Body, perpetually guided by the

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26. Ibid., p.112,

27. A.C.Banerjee, Guru Nanak and His Times, p.160.

28. Mcleod, Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion, p.1.

Holy Spirit."[29] Guru Granth and the Panth Khalsa ultimately assumed the pontificatory role Guru Nanak had entrusted to his successor, Guru Angad and the succeeding eight Gurus.[30]

Defining the meaning of the term Guru, as Guru Nanak conceived it and then personified it himself, Mcleod so aptly remarks:

> "For Nanak the Guru was the voice of God within the human heart, but with his own coming the function passed to the man himself. The function was vested in a particular man, Nanak, who, by means of his own exalted perception was qualified to instruct others. It was in this light that his followers understood his life and teachings and appended the title Guru to his name." 31

The Role of the Guru in Sikhism is sufficiently akin to that of Murshid and Pir in Sufism. Without a perfect and personal mediation, spiritual dissemination is not possible. Tara Chand says: "Like all Sufis Nanak taught that in the soul's journey towards God it was necessary to be guided by a Guru."[32]

The Guru's role and function, being of utmost difficulty and hazard, have been described in the mystic phrase, "to bear the unbearable."[33] Not all, but very few could bear this prophetic burden. Guru Nanak himself put his closest disciples to the hardest possible test in order to judge their spiritual mettle, because Guruship did not go

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29. Duncan Greenlees, Gospel of Guru Granth Sahib, p. CLXVII.

30. Cf. Mcleod, op.cit., p. 1.

31. The Sikhs of the Panjab, quoted in J.S. Grewal, Guru Nanak in History, pp. 289 f.

32. Influence of Islam on Indian Culture, p. 176.

33. G.S. Talib, Guru Nanak: His Personality and Vision, p. 100.

abegging; it had to be earned with sweat and blood. A Sikh writer says: "The Guru, in whom the flame of God burnt at its brightest and who was no worldling, decided to pass his sons over in the matter of succession to him. He did not wish to make the Divine Ministry a hereditary office, but must confer it on him who by devotion and purity would prove the fittest."[34]

This highest example and ideal set forth by Guru Nanak and his successor-Gurus became the solid spiritual bed-rock for the Sikhs in succeeding generations of trial and strife to stand upon, and history shows that the fittest among them gladly met the challenge of the gruesome trials by shedding their blood in courageous martyrdom. In matters of spirit, merit and quality count, not favour and kinship. Divine Grace dawns only on those who deserve. This is what Guru Nanak as Guru taught in practice as well as preaching.[35]

A brief discussion about the origin and tradition of the term Guru[36] may be useful for the understanding of the stages of development through which this concept must have passed before it reached the final meaning in Guru Nanak's thought.

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34. Loc. Cit.

35. Cf. J. S. Grewal, Guru Nanak in History, p. 301. and G. S. Talib, Guru Nanak: His Personality and Vision, p. 100.

36. For literal meaning see Bhai Vir Singh, Santhia Pothi, 1, 31. Derived from Sanskrit roots, the word Guru implies 'the bestower of Sabad', 'person of spiritual importance (gauray)' and 'one who dipells darkness with light'. Hence the prevalent meaning of 'preceptor' and 'the giver of Gur-mantar (the secret, mystical formula)! Cf. also MK, 311. and Rattan Singh Jaggi, Guru Nanak di Vichardhara, p. 320.

The term Guru has been in vogue since time immemorial. In ancient India the Guru was originally a school teacher. Max Weber says:

> "These ancient cultivated Vedic gurus of whom the law books still speak, were employed as house chaplains by kings and nobles and as tutors of their sons." 37

The term, however, developed into its present meaning of spiritual ministership in early medieval times. The same author further remarks:

> "The place of the Guru with respect to the believers was, in general, most widely extended in the Hindu community since the Brahmanical restoration. The position of the Guru was modeled after the original absolute authority of the distinguished teacher of the vedas (guru) over the scholar (brahmacharin)." 38

Basically a school teacher, the Guru gradually assumed the role of a spiritual preceptor, specially with the dominance of the devotional impulse as a form of worship assigned to the Bhakti Movement by Ramanuja in the South and Ramanand in the North. Mcleod writes:

> "The significance of the Guru in the bhakti tradition is well known ... within this tradition the ancient respect for one's spiritual teacher had been magnified to the point where the guru had become an object of devotion and his voice accepted as the veritable voice of God." 39

The veneration for the teacher or the master was equally strong in the Buddhist tantric tradition and the

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37. Religion of India (trans. and ed. Hans H.Gerth and Don Martindala), p.319.

38. Ibid., p.318.

39. Op.cit., p.197.

Nath-Yogi cult. But the concept of the Guru, as Mcleod suggests, received major modification in the Sant tradition to which Guru Nanak belonged. The new meaning attached to this term came to imply that "the Guru or Satguru represented the inner voice, the mystical movement of God in the inmost recesses of the human soul. The Guru remains the vital link the essential mediator of divine Truth, but no longer a human link."[40]

The Guru, in this context, may be said to have acquired such recondite mystical authority that, as in the case of Kabir,[41] Guru Nanak did not have the need for a human Guru and received direct dispensation from the Divine source. The function and authority of the Guru was, thus, so much apotheosized that he became not only an object of worship but an inevitable mediator between God and man. He actually became the absolute saviour of hamanity.

Having been identified with Sabad or Logos, the Guru became the virtual God of the universe. "The Guru accordingly is God; the Guru is the voice of God; and the Guru is the Word, the Truth of God."[42]

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40. Loc. Cit.

41. As Mcleod tries to prove his thesis on the subject. Loc. Cit.

42. Ibid., p. 199. The writer refers to Siddh Gosht, 43, AG., 942 and to Bilaval, 3, 795 to prove his point that since God is word and Guru is also word, there is virtual identification between them, as far as the universe is concerned. For Logos, see Marquette, Introduction to comparative Mysticism, p. 146.

In this sense of Guru-God-identification, Guru Nanak has often been equated with God in the mystical connotation of one who as Sabad (Word) totally identifies with the Divine reality immanent in the universe. Guru Arjan says:[43]

"Guru Nanak is God Himself known as Nanak."

Again:

"Guru Nanak is the embodiment of God."

This is a clear proof of the fact that according to Guru Nanak, the Guru was no human being but God Himself made manifest in Sabad and that in Sabad alone could God or Guru be identified or realized and from no other source could He be known.[44] Thus, the Sikh Gurus were 'divine beings' whose human form was no corporeality but divine manifestation and in this sense can they be really understood, because their true reality which is Sabad or Logos was ultimately restored and eternally fixed in the form of Guru Granth which is another name for revealed Sabad.[45]

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43. See Bhai Vir Singh, Santhia Pothi, 1, 32, These lines are from Ragas Gond and Basant respectively. Cf. Bhai Gurdas: "Guru Nanak Dev is Parbrahm (Godhead) and the Perfect God." Var, 13, 25. (Parbrahm puran brahm Gur Nanak deo).

44. For discussion of this point, see Supra, Chap. IV. ('Guru Nanak as a Mystic'). Cf. also Bhai Gurdas: Var, 32,2. "The image of the Guru is the Sabad of the Guru which is equally acceptable to the Sikh and the Sangat." (Gur murat gur sabad hai sadh sangat samsar parvana).

45. In 1708 A.D. the tenth and last human Guru (Guru Gobind Singh) at the time of his passing away in the physical sense at Nander (Sri Hazur Sahib) relegated the role of the Guru for all time to Guru Granth. See J.S.Grewal and S.S.Bal, Guru Gobind Singh, p.156.

This permanent metamorphosis of the Guru into Sabad also interposes another important implication that besides Guru Nanak who mystically transformed himself into nine successor-Gurus and ultimately into the form of Guru Granth Sahib, there can be no other human Guru in the same sense or position that Guru Nanak and the Sabad are called the Guru and that the later innovations of establishing cults[46] around some 'living' or 'dih-dhari' (corporeal) gurus are, according to Guru Nanak's teaching, quite untenable. This point constitutes and has been historically established to be an important cardinal belief in Sikhism.[47]

In Sikhism which is "all mysticism",[48] the purely mystical role of the Guru invariably works through the medium of Sabad which is not ordinary language or speech, but a revealed Word, coming directly from God through the eternally-appointed Guru, in the form of Guru Nanak, his nine incarnations and his spoken word called Sabad and Gurbani. No other Guru possesses this exalted authority reserved for Guru Nanak and his Sabad and hence the strict adherence in Sikhism to the worship of Guru Granth alongwith the rejection of all further 'living' Gurushin or Gurudom which at best can be a cheap hero-worship or a superstitious worship of a self-deceiving coterie.

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46. Such as Namdhari, Radhaswami and Nirankari sects. for detailed information see Teja Singh, Essays in Sikhism, pp.120 ff.

47. Cf. G.S.Talib, op.cit., p.143., J.S.Grewal, Guru Nanak in History, pp.290 f. and Jodh Singh, Gurmat Nirnai, pp.142-146.

48. Mohan Singh Uberoi, Sikh Mysticism, p.60.

The mystical ground of the Guru having descended from God Himself in theform of Sabad (revealed Word) or Gyan (esoteric knowledge) gradually evolved into a tangible, effective personality of Guru Nanak which in the historical and social context, proliferated into Sadh-Sangat, and a continous Gurushib in the form of Guru Granth and later into a developed religious society called Khalsa or Panth.[49] All this was a great mystical principle come true as a historical truth in due course of time. Undoubtedly the Guru's role was the key-role in the phenomenal development of Sikhism into a Sikh Nation.

Bearing this all-important truth in mind, a modern writer observes that in Sikhism "the greatest emphasis is laid on the role of the Guru and on the disciple's right approach to the Guru. There is only one Guru viz. God."[50]

Writing about the place of Guru in Sikhism, and calling him a definite spiritual model, Teja Singh highlights the personality of the Guru in the following words:

> "The personality of the Guru is at all times operative in the career of the disciple, commanding his whole being and shaping his life to its diviner issues, Without such a personality, there would be no cohesion, no direction in the moral forces of society and in spite of a thousand kinds of knowledge "there would still be utter darkness." 51

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49. Cf. Teja Singh, Sikhism: Its Ideals and Institutions, pp.19 ff. and J.S.Grewal, GuruNanak in History, p.301 f.

50. Mohan Singh Uberoi, op. cit., p.5.

51. Sikhism: Its Ideals and Institutions, p.17. The words in the end of the quotation, given within commas, have reference to Asa-di-Var, 1.

In the final analysis about the greatest importance attached to the position of the Guru in Sikhism, it can safely be averred that all spiritual authority, all institutional strength and all temporal prowess that Sikhism acquired in the two centruies after the religions pontificate of the ten Gurus (which was actually one-Gurushin), emanated from one mystical source named Guru Nanak. J.S. Grewal observes in this context:

> "If we were to choose one key-idea which lends unity to all these developments (that Sikhism came to acquire in history) it is surely the concept of the Guru which at once reconciled the uniqueness of Guru Nanak's position to the authority vested in his successors through that office, and which, at a different level, brought the bani and the panth into parallel prominence with the personal Guru." 52

Reverting to the meaning of the Sabad in its original regenerative role of saving the seething humanity, we must first make distinction between the two mystical concepts of Nam and Sabad, before we take cognizance of Sabad as conceived and posited by Guru Nanak in his works.

Basically speaking, Nam and Sabad are 'interchangeable' terms, as J.S.Grewal suggests[53] but whereas Nam is purely a numinous and mystical term with ineffable connotations like Hukam, Sabad is a more tangible and considerable term, in the sense that Sabad is something revealed or made manifest in order to kindle the light of true knowledge in the human

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52. Guru Nanak in History, p.313. The words within the parentheses have been added (not being in the original quotation) in order to complete the sense of the text.

53. Ibid., p.238.

mind, because knowledge is emancipation, according to vedanta mysticism.[54]

J. S. Grewal making a significant study of this issue, says:

> "To make a categorical distinction between the Word and the Name is not easy but the Name appears to refer to the object of communication and the word appears to refer to the medium of communication. The Word therefore, embraces all that embraces God's nature, the laws governing the universe as well as the inner mystical experience." 55

Sabad, as a medium of communication (in humanly comprehensible language and thought which implies articulation) between God and man, is probably the only understandable link that binds the two unequal categories (i.e. the spiritual and the corporeal) which Sufis call latafat and Kasafat.[56] To quote Mcleod again: "God Himself is, in His fullness, a mystery far exceeding the comprehension of man but in His Word He expresses Himself in terms which may be understood and followed."[57]

The basic and essential character of Sabad may be judged from the fact that the religious foundation of Sikhism

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54. Cf. Paul Deussen, Outline of the Vedanta, p.40. "From knowledge comes emancipation." Cf. also Guru Nanak's special emphasis on gyan (i.e. divine knowledge). Var Asa, Slok, AG., 469." As the pitcher holds water and without water it cannot be made, so the mind is contained by gyan and without Guru gyan is not possible." This pithy statement is typically mystical.

55. Op.cit., p.243.

56. Cf. Ghalib: "The subtlety cannot manifest itself without corporeality" (latafat be kasafat jalwa paida kar nahi sakti). Diwan-i-urdu.

57. Op. cit., p.194.

was laid on two things, as Teja Singh points out, viz. the holy Word (sabad) and the organized Fellowship (sangat).[58] This Fellowship was originally congregation or Sangat but when it was later developed and its strength multiplied, it came to be known as Panth Khalsa i.e. Sikh nation. So Sabad is the most vital principle in Sikhism (as revealed and personified in the Guru), which in its disseminal expansion created great impact on the society around and ultimately fructified into a theistic Brotherhood known as Khalsa (the pure) in the hands of Guru Gobind Singh.

It would, therefore, be useful to study the most important mystical aspects of Sabad as postulated by Guru Nanak.

1. Sabad is the supratemporal, supraspatial, transcendental reality of Godhead, called Sunn-Sabad (the Void-Logos)[59] by Guru Nanak. The Uncreate, Unmanifest Sabad is not only beyond all categories of being and not-being, but eternally immanent in all that is created and manifested. It is thus extermely paradoxical like the term Nam which is sat as well as Krit (i.e. Nitt-Eternal, as well as Anitt-

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58. Essays in Sikhism, p.56. Cf. Bhai Gurdas, Var 1, 42. "Without Guru's Word (Bani) and Fellowship (sangat) there is no other basis." This Guru Nanak said in reply to the Siddhas at Achal Vatala, when during discussion, they asked him to show some miracle in support of his claim for spiritual authority.

59. Siddh-Gosht, 53, AG. 944. "The uncreate Sabad lives in the Transcendent One." (Sunn-Sabad aparampar dhare).

ephemeral).[60] Thus it is that all those who are devoted to or absorbed in Sabad are perfect transcendent beings (bairagi).[61]

2. Sabad is knowable or perceivable only in human consciousness (surat) and nowhere else. Hence the well-known mystical concept of Sabad-Surat so commonly used to denote Sikh Yoga or Sikh mysticism. Guru Nanak categorically declares in Siddh-gosht:

"As the lotus flower
Does notdrown in the pool
As the duck swims,
So with the mind intent
Upon the word of the Guru
One can safely cross
The great sea of life,
Repeating the Holy Name.[62]

Again, answering the question posed by the Siddhas as to who was his Guru, Guru Nanak said:

"Sabad is my Guru and the continuity of attention is the disciple."

Here Guru Nanak implies that as Guru himself he was Sabad and this Sabad was his Guru in the sense of

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60. Ibid., 59, AG., 944. "That Sabad lives eternally (as something) invisible: wherever we see, it is there." (Su sabad kau nirantar vas alakhang jeh dekha teh soi).

61. Parbhati, AG., 1332, (Nam rate pure bairagi). Cf. Jodh Singh, art. "Guru Nanak Dev ate Vedant", Guru Nanak: Jiwan, Darshan, te kav-kala, ed. S.S.Kohli, p.80.

62. Siddh-gosht, 5, AG., 938, trans. SSWS, 99.

being a mystical principle revealed to him by God who was the Primal Guru.[63]

3. Sabad is the only saviour or saving factor in the universe. No body ever became God-conscious unless the Sabad or Logos quickened his consciousness. This may mean a mystical transformation inside the heart and not an outward mechanical action or intellectual understanding. Guru Nanak says:

> "A Brahman may read the religious text thrice a day and also discuss its grammar.
>
> (But) without Guru's sabad no one can ever be saved and without God's Nam the man will die distraught."64

The outward contact with the Guru or ritualistic uttering of the Sabad or Nam cannot be effective, as they cut no ground in the spirit itself, where alone the ingress of the divine principle can take place. This is how Guru Amar Dass (the third Guru) clarifies this point:

> "All the people in the world turn up to see the Guru,
>
> But by mere seeing they cannot be saved unless ~~they~~ they ponder over the Sabad.
>
> Their egoistic impurity cannot be removed unless they get to love the Nam." 65

"Without virtuous action", says Guru Nanak, " no one can worship God."[66] And how can virtuous action or moral

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63. Cf. Sohila-Arti, Asa, AG., 12, SSWS, 61. "Six the systems, Six their teachers and six their different teachings: The Lord (Guru) of them all is the One Lord."

64. Bhairo, AG., 1127.

65. Var Wadhans M. 3, AG., 594.

66. Japji, 21, AG., 4. (Vin gun kite bhagat na hoe).

character be acquired? The Guru clearly formulates:

> "None ever acquired high chacracter without (acquiring) the Word (Sabad)." 67

In another lucid statement, the Guru avers:

> "Why should we wanter when it is Truth that ennobles and purifies?
> Without true Sabad there is no salvation." 68

To take one more example out of many that can be cited:

> "To have one's mind firmly engrossed in the Sabad is the quitessence of all virtue." 69

4. Sabad is often equated with Anhad Sabad in Adi Granth, but actually these are separate terms and cannot be used for each other. This wider use of the word Sabad can be linked with its origin from the Nath source, through Sant channels, as Mcleod suggests.[70] Whereas anhad sabad is purely a mystical experience relating to the hearing of the "soundless sound" or "unstruck music",[71] the sabad itself is the revealed Word made manifest through the Guru, who is basically an embodiment of the Divine Truth or God Himself mystically metamorphosed into human agency. Inversely

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67. Var Malars, 16, AG., 1285. (Bin Sabade achar na kinhi paia).

68. Siddh Gosht, 2 AG.,938 (Kia bhaviai sach sucha hoe, Sach sabad bin mukt na hoe).

69. Ramkali, AG.,908. (Manua asthir sabade rata eha karni sari).

70. Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion, p.191. For the meaning of Anhad Sabad, see MK, 43.

71. Loc.Cit., For a detailed study of Anhad Sabad see infra Esoteric Mysticism.

speaking, God is manifest only in Sabad, as Guru Nanak says:

"He has neither form, colour nor material sign,
but He is revealed through the true Word (sabad)."[72]

Guru Nanak has the highest word of praise for the man who is immersed in the Sabad which is the greatest spiritual principle in the whole universe:

"Nanak is ever full of praise for those who
were absorbed in one Sabad."[73]

5. Only the Guru is given the divine power to reveal or create the Sabad in human language for the benefit of humanity, for which Guru Nanak has used the metaphor of "minting the Word". Just as true or intrinsic coins are minted by the royal authority only and not by any counterfeit means, so the Guru is the only Perfect Being on earth who can vouchsafe the Sabad, with the divine grace at his back. There is however, a definite spiritual-ethical criterion of human perfection as a precondition for deserving the incidence of Sabad-bestowing Grace. Guru Nanak in the last Stanza of Japji says:

"Let continance be the (goldsmith's) workshop and
patience be the goldsmith.

Let reason be the anvil and knowledge be the
instrument.

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72. Sorath, AG., AG 597. Trans. Mcleod, op.cit., p.193. (Na tis rup varn nahi rakhia sachai sabad nisan).

73. Ramkali, AG., 879 (Nanak tin ke sad balihari jin ek sabad liv lai).

Let fear be the bellows and penance be the fire.

Let love be the utensil in which the holy nectar be poured.

In this manner, the Guru's Word (sabad) can be minted in the true mint.

Those who are blessed in His eyes, win His favour. Nanak, it is only Divine Grace that saves man."[74]

The Sabad is thus closely integrated with idea of the Divine Grace.

GRACE AND FREE WILL.

The question of inter-relationship between 'divine grace' and 'free will' (jabr and ikhtiyar of Sufi mysticism) is indeed baffling. The controversy as to which of these two is relatively more important and determinative in the matter of human salvation, has been raging among theologians of all the great world religions since time immemorial.

According to Guru Nanak, however, 'grace' (which has been expressed in the Adi Granth by various terms such as nadar, kirpa, mehar, karam, prasad, bakhshish, raham, taras, bakhshindgi, anugreh, bhana, dat, and so on),[75] is the determinant factor which 'must decide the issue."[76]

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74. Japji, 38, AG., 8. trans. Dewan Singh, Guru Nanak's Message in Japji, p. 155. Cf. Var Majh, 12, AG, 143. "The true Guru turns the false ones into genuine; his sabad has the power to transform." (Satgur khoteon khare kare sabad swaranhar).

75. Cf. Mcleod, op.cit., p. 205. For definition of 'grace', see A. Huxley, Perennial Philosophy, p. 191. "Defined in Psychological terms, grace is something other than our self-conscious personal self, by which we are helped." Cf. also Loehlin, Sikhs and Their Scriptures, p. 49.

76. Mcleod, Loc. Cit.

In fact, Guru Nanak has laid so much emphasis on the imperative need of free will as well as human initiative and action (Karma)[77] that sometimes one is liable to underrate the importance of nadar-karam (grace), but Guru Nanak has resolved the issue by clearly stating in Japji that by good actions in the previous births one gets human life and by grace one attains salvation.[78]

This mystical solution of the problem offered by the Guru provides a clear reference in itself to the dual quality of human nature which has both immediate and ultimate areas of operation and contact with divine Reality. Man must immediately act as best as he can (which is the essense of all karma i.e. to act selflessly and without caring for the result)[79] but ultimately speaking he must wait for and depend upon the divine 'favour' and 'choice'[80] i.e. for the grace that saves and liberates human beings irrespective of their merits in action and free will. Though grace can be and is often linked with meritorious and virtuous action, yet in ultimate analysis grace is transcendental and

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77. The more typical word used by the Sikh Gurus for karma is karni. Cf. e.g. Sarang (var M.4) Guru Nanak, Slok, AG.,1238; Siri, AG.,25; Var Majh, 7, AG.,141. and Var Majh,12, AG.143. Cf. The imperative need for human action in order to deserve Grace, Paul Brunton, Inner Reality, pp.56, 164.

78. Japji,4, AG,2 "By actions one gets human body and by grace finds the way to salvation." (Karmi avai kapta nadari mokh duar).

79. Cf.Guru Arjan,Gauri Sukhmani 9,AG,274. (Karam karat hovai nehkaram. This baisnu ka nirmal dharam). Cf.The great emphasis on selfless and dedicated action in Gita as discussed by Paul Brunton, Inner Reality, p.182.

80. Cf. Mcleod, op.cit., p.206.

absolute and not dependent on any human prerequisites.[81]

The concept of nadar in Guru Nanak is closely interlinked (in fact, it is coequal) with the concept of Hukam and is thus symbolic of divine mystery and, as J.S.Grewal says, of "God's inscrutable omnipotence".[82] Guru Nanak has said that "God's Bounty is as great as He Himself is"[83] which means that the Divine Being, His Hukam and His grace (which is another expression for His Bounty) are almost synonymous terms. The Guru again remarks that "those who receive His gracious nadar, are on the right path."[84] J.S.Grewal cites another example for the absolute nature of nadar, reflecting as it does the Absoluteness of God and His Hukam:

> "Through His daya a mere heron is transformed into a swan."[85]

If God is karan-karan (i.e. Absolute Creator or the Primal Cause of all creation), then His nadar is also

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81. Cf. Sri, AG.,61. "If we get His grace, we can find Him; with our own effort we cannot know Him." (Karam milai ta paiai ap na laia jai). See also loc.cit.,"There is no one true or false, only those whom you like are good." (Jo tudh Bhave se bhale khota khara na koe).

82. Guru Nanak in History, p.256.

83. Asa, AG., 9. (Jevad ap tevad teri dat).

84. Japji, AG,8 (Jin ko nadar Karam tin kar), Cf.J.S.Grewal, op.cit., p.256.

85. Loc. Cit. with reference to Basant Hindol, AG, 1171. (Bagalai tai phun hansala hovai jai tu karai dayala).

absolutely absolute.[86] In this matter Guru Nanak's thought is quite positive and non -compromising, in as much as he says that if God chooses to punish somebody by granting him eve rlasting sorrow and hunger, it is still His Bounty and Favour.[87] An exactly similar example occurs in Guru Nanak with regard to Divine order (Hukam) :

"By Divine order some are blessed and favoured,
while others are eternally discarded."[88]

A man's effort is utterly meaningless and futile if God does not favour him with His nadar. Guru Nanak declares:

"Nanak, those who are deprived of His Grace
can neither resort to charity nor devote to the Name."[89]

It is, thus, evident that Nadar and Hukam are, like Nam and Sabad, purely mystical concepts, because no human reason or rationality can possibly be brought forward and advanced to their explanation and justification. There are hundreds of such expressions in Guru Nanak and the other Gurus and Bhagats included in the Adi Granth which clearly highlight the Absoluteness and Ommipotence of God. To cite a brilliant passage from Guru Nanak:

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86. Cf. Guru Arjan Gauri Sukhmani, 11, Slok, AG., 276 (Karan karan prabh ek hai dusar nahi koe, Nanak tis balharne jal thal mahial soe).

87. Japji, 25, AG., 5 (Ketia dukh bhukh sad mar, Eh bhai dat teri datar).

88. Japji, 2, AG, 5 (Ikna hukami bakhsis ik hukami sada bhavaiai).

89. Siri, AG, 15. (Nanak nadari bahare racheh dan na nai).

"He makes tigers, hawks and other birds of prey (charags and kuhis) to eat grass:

While those who eat grass are made to eat flesh; this is the way of His will.

He may show mounds of earth in the rivers and covert a desert into an ocean.

He may exalt a worm into kingship and raze to ashes a great army.

All created beings keep alive by breathing but if He wants He can keep them alive without breathing.

Nanak says, just as it pleases the True Lord, He sustains all accordingly. 90

Again:

"Every body is under His care and He keeps them all busy within His sight.

He Himself gives them honourable positions and causes them do (virtuous) acts.

He is the greatest Lord who created His vast universe and keeps all the creatures.

If He looks askance, the kings get ruined;

And if they beg for alms, they get not anything."[91]

Since the one God has no second or rival and since none exists beside Him and all His creation is just His manifestation or emanation, there can be no doubt or question about His Absoluteness and Almightiness. His grace and His anger make all the difference to the created beings; the former is enough to save while the latter is sure to lead to perdition. There is no other course or alternative left for man but to obey and understand His Hukam (hukam manai or

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90. Var Majh, Slok, AG., 144.

91. Var Asa, 16, AG., 472.

hukam bujhai) and to seek His Nadar, bhana and karam (i. e. His Grace). All else is futile. Guru Nanak is extremely sanguine on this point:

"There is one Throne and one King.
He is the Disdainful Lord, pervading every where.
The whole universe is His creation.

He is the One Creator (Ekankar), the Unknowable, Absolute One." 92

J. S. Grewal has resolved the issue of 'grace' vis-a-vis 'free will' in lucent words:

"There is a point beyond which human understanding cannot proceed and there, it is the bestowing or withholding of God's grace that decides the issue of salvation. Thus Guru Nanak's idea of God's grace repudiates all presumption to salvation by mere effort." 93

The Divine Grace comes to man if he is totally dedicated and single-mindedly devoted, in heart and soul, to the Lord of the Grace. Guru Nanak says:

"The grace of the master is on those who meditated
on Him with single mind and they have found favour
in His heart." 94

The whole course of man's effort and initiative, in the true sense, is not directed towards any other goal but to please the Lord and deserve His grace. This is the mystical

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92. Basant, AG., 1188.

93. Guru Nanak in History, p. 257. Cf. The inevitability of Grace as the final saving factor as discussed in the context of Bhagavad Gita by Paul Brunton, Inner Reality, pp. 35, 184-85

94. Siri, AG., p. 24. trans. Mcleod, op.cit., p. 206. (Khasam ki nadar dileh pasinde jini kar ek dhiaia.).

meaning that lies at the source of all human worship and meditation, as well as all action and will.

The perfect man (for which the most appropriate metaphor of the Suhagan i.e. 'faithfull bride'[95] is commonly used in Sikh and, for that matter, in all Bhakti mysticism) is one whom the Master (Khasam) has chosen for His favour.

Guru Nanak Says:

> 'That day is blessed when the Divine Husband looks upon the human bride with favour and she thus acquires all the treasures (in the world).
>
> That bride is the 'accepted one' (suhagan) who is loved by her husband; Nanak says, she is the 'chosen lady'." 96

All human action, in this meaning of the total dependence upon divine grace, is, thus, dedicative and transformative and not becoming in itself any cherished goal, always remains real as a means to the end. Aldous Huxley says:

> "Deliverance is out of time into eternity, and is achieved by obedience and docility to the eternal Nature of Things. We have been given free will, in order that we may will our self-will out of existence and so come to live continuously in a 'state of grace'. All our actions must be directed, in the last analysis, to make ourselves passive in relation to the activity and the being of divine Reality." 97

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95. Cf. Aldous Huxley Perennial Philosophy, p.190. "In every exposition of the Perennial Philosophy the human soul is regarded as feminine in relation to the Godhead, the Personal God and even the Order of Nature. Hubris, which is the original sin, consists in regarding the personal ego as self-sufficiently masculine in relation to the spirit within and to Nature without, and in behaving accordingly."

96. Tilang, AG., 722. (Sauh nadar kar dekhe so din lekhe kaman naunidh pai. Apne kant piari sa suhagan Nanak sa sabhrai).

97. Huxley, op. cit.,p.190. For liberation (mukti) see Kapur Singh, Parasharprasha or Baisakhi of Guru Gobind Singh, p.374 f.

Mystically speaking, the free will itself has to be converted and trained into a controlled and subservient will, so that it does not remain refractory and obtrusive. In technical language, it should become voluntas communis (i.e. a will that is shared and is the will common to man and God) and not voluntas propria which is acquisitive and thus the root of all sin.[98] The will is not to be negated but to be adjusted so that it becomes acceptable to grace. Actually both are co-existent on the human level, though grace is ultimately speaking absolute, as discussed earlier, St. Bernard says: "Grace is necessary to salvation, free will equally so -- but grace in order to give salvation, free will in order to receive it."[99]

Emphasising the importance of will at human level, William Law remarks:[100]

> "The will is that which has all power; it makes heaven and it makes hell; for there is no hell but where the will of the creature is turned from God, nor any heaven but where the will of the creature worketh with God."

Similarly Eckhart[101] observes:

> "God expects but one thing of you, and that is that you should come out of yourself in so far as you are a created being and let God be God in you."

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98. Ibid.,p.199. Cf. Guru Angad, Var Asa, Slok (Pauri 7) AG.,466. "The lower ego (haumai) is a deep malady but its remedy also lies in itself." (Haumai diragh rog,hai daru bhi is maheh).

99. Quoted in Huxley, Loc.Cit.

100. Ibid., p.200.

101. Loc. Cit.

The so-called 'free-will' (it is not so free a will as in often thought[102]) and the human effort as such, have a useful role to play in making it possible for the divine grace to 'act' or 'come into play'. As Marquette remarks, the idea of grace does not preclude the human aspiration to gain salvation as it is ingraned in every heart. But he further remarks that Hindu mysticism does not accept the 'restrictive Calvinistic idea of predetermination', because man must be lifted above individual limitatous "by a spark from the Infinite."[103]

"The supreme perfection", says St. Teresa, " ... consists in reducing our will to such conformity to that of God that as soon as we understand that a thing is willed by Him, we attach ourselves with all our will power; finally to receive with an equal delight that which is sweet and that which is bitter."[104]

The concept of Grace (Nadar) ultimately merges into the concept of Hukam, in Guru Nanak's thought, with the probable distinction that whereas Nadar operates purely on

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102. Cf. Sufi poet Ghalib: "The analogy for my effort is this much, as if a caged bird may be trying to gather straws to make his nest while he is confined in the cage." Diwan-i-Urdu Radif Ya. Cf. also Mir Taqi Mir (the celebrated Urdu poet): "The odium of free will has been laid undeservedly on us. The divine being ordains whatever He likes and we mortals have been 'defamed' for nothing." Diwan-Urdu, Radif Alif.

103. Introduction to Comparative Mysticism, p.35.

104. Ibid.,p.151. Cf. Mohammad Iqbal: "Raise your self to such an extent that God, when He wills anything, may ask His slave in your person, as to what is your will?" Bang-i-Dira.

the divine level, and is thus inscrutable, Hukam has its operative relavance on the human level and is thus understandable. Nadar is all prayer,[105] while Hukam is all obedience. Guru Nanak holds that mortals are helpless before the absolute power of Hukam and should only seek divine grace (which Sufis call Fazl as compared to human effort which is connected with Adl i.e. judgement). He says:

> "All come into being through Hukam and do whatever Hukam ordains.
>
> By Hukam they are subject to death and by Hukam they can merge into Truth.
>
> Nanak, whatever pleases God, that happens and these created beings have no power whatsoever." 106

Only dedicated effort is justifiable, because self-willed effort goes waste. Guru Nanak says that "All make their full effort but what God ordains only that happens."[107]

Grace has also a wider meaning, as a modern Sikh writer suggests and in this sense, it is "for every one",[108] which implies that all human beings are equal and their ultimate salvation is the result of a creating and saving divine grace. The same writer defining grace says. "It is perpetual inspiration ... "[109]

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105. St. Augustine in this sense calls grace, Eucharism which means 'communion with God'. Marquette, op.cit.,p.144.

106. Siri, AG.,55.

107. Var Asa, Slok (Pauri,11) AG.,469. (Sabhni Chhala maria karta kare so hoe).

108. Gopal Singh, Religion of the Sikhs, p.89.

109. Ibid., p.88.

In Guru Nanak the idea of divine grace is also applicable to the 'grace of the Guru'.[110] It occurs in the very first Credal statement (Mul-mantar) enunciated by Guru Nanak, in the form of Gur-prasad which means that God can only be known or realized "with the grace of the Guru". God saves the universe through the agency of the Saviour - Guru and since God and Guru are one, it is all Divine Grace. The Guru is God Himself become manifest to the Universe. He is the spiritually and humanly operative aspect of Godhead. Gopal Singh says:

> "Thus identifying the Guru with the only eternal verity which is God, whose essence within us is the soul, Sikhism has made the laws of God and soul universally applicable and valid. Redemption is for every one who awakens his within. The Guru, like the God, is for every one, every age and every clime." 111

Guru Nanak has devoted one full hymn to expressing the saving kindness and grace of the Guru which is indispensable:

> "If sat-Guru is kind, then faith is complete.
> If sat-Guru is kind, there is no repentence.
> If sat-Guru is kind, no sorrow is felt.
> If sat-Guru is kind, divine love is tasted.
> If sat-Guru is kind, there is no fear of death.
> If sat-Guru is kind, there is eternal bliss.
> If Sat-Guru is kind, we obtain all precious things.
> If sat-Guru is kind, we get merged into Truth." 112

To sum up, the Divine grace and the Guru's grace (which are actually one and the same) are given to the 'blessed'

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110. Cf. C.H. Lohelin, Sikhs and their Scriptures, p.49. " ... God's grace is mediated through the Guru." Again: "'Parsad' is found over 636 times in the Adi Granth."

111. Op.cit., p.61.

112. Var Majh, 25, AG.,149 Cf. Mcleod, op.cit., 197 f.

soul in mystical experience as a beautiful gift of inspiration, with which the life of such a receipient and experient soul is all transformed and become at once holy and sublime. Mohan Singh Uberoi writes:

> "The Mystic after his mystic experiences returns to life much richer, much more powerful, much more effectively co-operant, much more generous-liberal, much more loving-serving and much more sympathetic and knowing." 113

EGO (HAUMAI) AND DUALITY (DUBIDHA).

Haumai is an original term used by Guru Nanak to express the 'unregenerate' condition of human soul, for which as Mcleod has discussed,[114] no English equivalent is fully suitable. The term 'ego' has psychological ramifications, but it has a workable and popular usage and may serve the purpose. The 'unregenerate' man who is engrossed in haumai is, according to Mcleod, one "who ignores God and follows instead the dictates of haumai"[115] and is, as such, a 'diseased' person (rogi).[116]

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113. Sikh Mysticism, p.23.

114. Mcleod has suggested many terms such as 'pride'(originally used by Macauliffe in Sikh Religion), garab, hankar, sin (of Christian connotation) 'self' and 'self-centredness', and has concluded 'ego' to be the nearest usable term. /See op.cit.,pp.182 f./ James Drever, A Dictionary of Psychology, p.79. for the psychological meaning of the term 'ego'.

115. Ibid.,p.187.

116. Cf. Guru Arjan, Bhairo, AG.,1140 "whoever is visible (in this world) is diseased; only my true Guru is diseaseless". (Jo Jo dise so so rogi. Rog rahat mera satgur jogi). Cf. also Jairam Mishr, Guru Nanak Dev Jiwan Aur Darshan (Hindi), p.269.

Haumai, in Sikh thought, is the greatest cause of human degeneration, distraction and corruption and is, thus, the surest passport to disaster and perdition. According to Mcleod:

> "For Guru Nanak it is haumai which controls the man of unregenerate man and so determines the pattern of his life. The results are disastrous, for instead of leading a man to release and salvation his haumai will invariably stimulate affections which can only bind him more firmly to the wheel of transmigration." 117

Haumai may be defined as the unsettled, confused state of mind of a man who cannot distinguish between the Real and the Unreal, because he has been distracted by the effect of maya towards perceiving the phenomenal world as something real. This wrong perception inevitably leads to a 'dual perception' of seeing the world in its contradictoriness of good and bad, high and low, day and night, heaven and hell, chastity and sin, richness and poverty, attachment and detachment, love and hatred, and so on. This 'dual perception' is called, in Guru Nanak's terminology, dubidha, which is a close concomitant of haumai.

While haumai is the root-cause of this human waywardness and distance from 'godliness', dubidha is the result of this inner distraction caused by maya and is basically a psychological problem, because in dubidha a man is so inwardly confused and unsettled that he cannot make correct decision about any thing or find the right course of life which may lead to eternal happiness. He is thus suffering from

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117. Op.cit., p.182.

schizophrenia[118] or what is called a 'split' personality.

Haumai (ego) is the avidya (i.e. ignorance) of the upanishadic or Vedanta mysticism and is so basic and fundamental that it is not mere mental distraction or 'disease'[119] but it is the chief instrument in the hands of maya not only for creating the transient, flux-ridden and mirage-like universe, but also maintaining it in the same unregenerate or degenerate condition and ultimately destroying it by the weapon of its own original destructibility. The Sufi poet Ghalib says:[120]

> "In my construction itself an element of destruction is hidden.
>
> The hot blood of the peasant is (in fact) a leaven of the lightning that destroys the harvest of grain."

Guru Nanak has discussed the nature of haumai in a revealing passage included in his well-known composition Asa-di-Var, which may be cited in toto:

> "In haumai one comes and in haumai goes. In haumai is he born and in haumai dies. In haumai, he gives and in haumai takes. In haumai is one truthful and in haumai false. In haumai he thinks of evil and of virtue. In haumai he lands himself into hell and into heaven. In haumai he laughs and in haumai he weeps. In haumai he is polluted and in haumai chastened. In haumai he loses his caste and his species. In haumai is he foolish and also wise

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118. Cf. James Drever, A Dictionary of Psychology, p.258. "Schizophrenia: A type of mental disorder ... characterized by dissociation, particularly between the intellectual processes and the affective, the latter being also to a great extent disorganized."

119. Cf. Guru Angad, Var Asa, Slok, AG,466, "Haumai is a deep malady ..."

120. Diwan-i-Urdu.

and in haumai he remains totally forgetful of salvation. In haumai is there maya and in haumai is superstition (chhaya). By producing haumai, the world was created. If one understands haumai, he will find the door of salvation. Without true knowledge, the man tires himself by too much talking. Nanak says, by Hukam are recorded the signs of fate. Just as God makes you see, you may perceive." 121

In the same composition another exquisite passage by Guru Angad on the subject of haumai is worth quoting:

> "Haumai has this quality that in haumai man indulges in action. In haumai this is the condition that it causes repeated rebirth, From where comes this haumai and how can it be discarded? Haumai is the same Hukam which causes preconditioned avocations. Haumai is a deep malady and the remedy also lies in itself. If it pleases God, then one contemplates the Sabad. Nanak says, listen O' Friend, in this way, the sorrow is removed." 122

Haumai is basically speaking 'the pride of selfhood' or the 'vanity of life'. A vain feeling of self-existence and the transient human powers added to it, create in the ordinary man a sense of false capability and a false security which make him totally oblivious of an uncertain future and a disastrous end. But if a man overcomes this superious complacency and abasement and instead takes refuge in the worship of God and the Guru, he is saved. When there is no self-pride, there is no change of self-abasement, in fact, of any entanglement or involvement whatsoever. Guru Nanak says:

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121. Var Asa, Slok (Pauri 7), AG.,466.

122. Var Asa, Slok (Guru Angad), AG.,466.

"One who thinks <u>he is</u>, says Nanak, will be grabbed (by death).

(While) I have no <u>haumai</u> and hence no chance of getting into rebirth." 123

The ruinous <u>haumai</u> which separates men from their Creator has ruined myriads of beings, who lost their lives in mere indulgence:

"Forgetting the Lord, they enjoyed sensual acts.
By so doing many diseases crept up in their bodies." 124

Guru Nanak has vividly described the wretched condition of those who have no good qualities in them, yet they are so vain and arrogant:

"There are those who possess neither awareness, nor reason, nor wisdom and have no understanding of the mysteries of the world.
Nanak, such people are pure dunces who display vanity without having any virtue in them." 125

The maladies caused by <u>haumai</u>, says the Guru, are reprehensible; every where it is <u>haumai</u> that causes sorrow and only the Guru's word (<u>sabad</u>) can save the humanity. 126

In Guru Nanak's thought the whole world is a fictitious expansion caused by the magical power of <u>maya</u> which works through the agency of self-caused ignorance called <u>haumai</u>.

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123. <u>Var Malar</u>, <u>Slok</u>, <u>AG</u>.,1289. (<u>Hoda phariag Nanak jan. Na hau na mai joni pan</u>).

124. <u>Malar</u>, <u>AG</u>.,1256. (<u>Khasam visar kiai rasbhog. Ta tan uthh khloe rog</u>).

125. <u>Sarang</u>, <u>AG</u>.,1246. (<u>Ikna suddh na buddh na akal sar akhar ka bheo na lahant. Nanak se nar asal khar ji bin gur garabh karant</u>.)

126. <u>Bhairo</u>, <u>AG</u>.,1153. (<u>Nanak haumai rog bure. Jeh dekha teh eka bedan ape bakhse sabad dhure</u>).

The Guru calls the world, in this sense, "a house of smoke."[127] The world thus contaminated by haumai and caught in the meshes of duality (dubidha) is nothing but 'diseased' (rogi) and Guru Nanak includes the whole 'phenomena' in this 'contaminated' state:

> "The air, the water, the fire are 'diseased' and the whole earth is 'diseased'. So are mother, father, the maya and the body 'diseased' and also families and relations thereof. Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva are 'diseased'; in fact, the whole world is 'diseased'..." 128

By the term 'diseased' the Guru implies the impure state of 'contamination' caused by maya and haumai. Separation from divine truth and ignorance caused by self-hood is generally expressed in terms of 'dirt' and 'filth' (mail, rog) in Guru Nanak's mystical thought. Perhaps the best word to express the nature of maya is impurity (anjan). The worst form of haumai is dubidha: "The 'disease' of duality (dubidha) is the greatest malady, in which man becomes a slave of maya."[129]

In duality (dubidha) there is utter distraction. Unless it is removed, the right path cannot be found. Guru Nanak says:

> "By removing dubidha, recognize the Sabad.
> Perceive the one Reality in your ownself and outside.

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127. Var Majh, Slok, 138. (Dhandolim dhudhim dithh mai Nanak jag dhue ka dhavalhar).

128. Bhairo, AG, 1246.

129. Loc. Cit. Cf. Prem Parkash Singh, Guru Nanak ate Nirgundhara. p. 139.

Such wisdom is the essence of the Sabad.

In dubidha one gets odium as his fate."[130]

By discarding or shunning duality one becomes unitive, i.e. the votary of the Formless One. In other words from mayadhari (maya-engrossed) and dubhida-chari (duality ridden) he becomes Nirankari. Guru Nanak has often been named in Janam Sakhis and other Sikh Writings as "Nanak Nirankari". He himself says:

"The thoughtful person chooses his course carefully.

By shunning dubidha he becomes one with the Nirankar (Formless God)." 131

The haumai-engrossed (i.e. the ego-centric) man, who is also simultaneously duality-ridden (dubidha-grast) is called manmukh in Sikh terminology. The manmukh is the opposite of Gurmukh, just as manmat or durmat is the opposite of Gurmat. All Sikh Mysticism lies in the adoption of Gurmat (i.e. Guru's Wisdom) and the abnegation of durmat or haumai. They are diametrically opposite to each other:

"Haumai is the opposite of Nam, both cannot live in one place."[132]

So haumai and dubidha have no locus standi in Guru Nanak's mysticism. They must at all costs be negated

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130. Parbhati, AG.,1343. (Dubidha chuke ta sabad pachhan. Ghar bhar eko kar jan. Eha mat sabad hai sar. Vich dubidha mathe pavai chhar.

131. Dhanasari, AG,685. (Rakh rakh charan dhare vichari. Dubidha chhod bhai nirankari).

132. Guru Amar Dass, Wadhans, AG, 560. (Haumai navai nal virodh hai doe na vase ik thhai).

and abjured. The self or man in itself is something spiritually untenable. It leads to perdition until and unless it is infused with the word (sabad), or the divine Name (Nam). The mind must be controlled or restrained and thus conquered. Guru Nanak has used the latter term in Japji, Stanza 28, whose concluding line is:

> "Let 'sympathy with all beings' be your great yogic sect and (thus) by conquering the mind, you conquer the world." 133

Man's own effort to control the mind cannot succeed as the mind is too restless (chanchal) and stubborn (hathhila) and has no effect against itself, just as dirt cannot clean the dirt. For cleaning some impurity, we need the principle or element of purity. This is exactly what Guru Nanak calls sabad or Nam:

> "If the reason is putrified by the force of sins, it can be cleaned by the love of Name." 134

The metaphor used in Sikhism (Gurmat) for the negation of haumai, is 'burning';[135] that is, the efficatious sabad 'burns' the haumai, by its mystical power of changing and transforming all that comes into contact with it. It

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133. "Aai panthi sagal jamati man jite jag jit." Japji, 28, AG.,6.

134. Japji, 20, AG.,4. (Bhariai mat papa kai sang. Oh dhopai navai kai rang). Cf. Inge, Mysticism, in Religion, p.41. The ego can only know itself as object and the object is not the self."

135. Cf. Guru Amar Dass, Suhi, AG.,768: "He is the servant of God (Bhagat) and is Guru-faced (Gurmukh), whose haumai has been 'burnt' by Sabad". (So bhagat jo gurmukh hovai haumai sabad jalai ram).

chastens all the human impurities, viz. haumai, dubidha, manmat, durmat and maya - all that binds human life to the shackles of ignorance and avidya.

Though in all matters of spiritual regeneration, according to Guru Nanak, the first step always is the Guru's grace without which nothing is possible, yet on another level of thought, the Guru inspires the seeker after 'true path' (Sachcha marag) to take maximum initiative possible for him towards achieving the goal, because for the greatest aspirations only supreme effort and supreme sacrifice can avail. So Guru Nanak strongly enjoins upon the Sikh (disciple) to do his utmost effort, with extreme "single-mindedness", to resist evil and to restrain the mind,[136] of course with the help and grace of the Guru. The Guru avers:

> "One should remember the One Lord, with his mind unruffled and should stop the mind from going astray." 137

Again:

> "Restrain the running mind within yourself; this instruction has been received from the Guru himself." 138

In exceedingly trenchant thought, the Guru enlightens the votary:

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136. Guru Nanak uses the word nirodh for mental control. Cf. Siri, AG.,19 (Karam milai sach paiai gurmukh sada nirodh).

137. Sorath, AG.,634 (Eko chete manua na dole dhawat varaj rahai).

138. Sorath, AG.,599. (Chaltau thhak rakho ghar apne gur miliai ih mat hoi jio).

"You cannot keep your own house protected from deception, then why are you keen to pilfer another's house?

One can protect his own door and house, if he enjoys the bliss (of Nam); this is possible only for the servant of God who acts through the grace of the Guru." 139

LOVING DEPOTION: LOVE MYSTICISM.

So far we have discussed that the 'mystic path' leading to eternal happiness begins with the Guru who mediates the all-pervasive sabad and thus acts between God and man, in a manner that preconceives the inevitability of divine Grace (which is also Guru's Grace) for the saving of humanity. Human effort and will is only limited to a man's final choice whether to follow his own deceptive haumai or to discard it totally in favour of the Guru's uttam panth 140 which is another term for the 'mystic path'. Now we may consider the true path itself which is prema-bhagti or 'loving devotion'. No other method or path (sadhan) is so effective

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139. Sorath, AG., 598. (Apna ghar musat rakh na sakeh ki par ghar johan laga. Ghar dar rakheh je ras chakheh jo gurmukh sevak laga).

140. Cf. Bhat Kirat, Swayyai M.4, AG., 1406. "We have heard about the uttam panth of the Guru's sangat by meeting which we have removed all fear of death." (Ik Uttam panth sunio gur sangat teh milant jam tras mitai). Uttam Panth means the 'excellent path'. Cf. Bhai Gurdas calls it nirmal panth(i.e. 'pure religion'): "Guru Nanak struck the new coin (of Pontificate) in the world and promulgated his nirmal panth." Var.1, 45.

as this; in fact, all other paths acquire efficacy if they lead to or converge into this all-embracing path.

The path of love and its actualization in the form of inner devotion (bhagti) is basically mystical. Mcleod calls it 'interior religion'.[141] When a seeker rejects and discards all outward methods of approach to Reality such as idolatory, ritualistic worship, pilgrimage, fasting, superstitions devotion to the manifold deities to the exclusion or neglect of the One Supreme Being, the mere recitation of the scriptures and so on,[142] he tries to find the real, truthful method of acquiring union with God and ultimately by the grace of the Guru, he comes to the inward mystical path of 'loving devotion' which proves a true anchor to his wanderings in the ocean of distraction.

As Mcleod remarks:

> "Religion is inward and its basic expression is love, or more accurately, loving devotion. This loving devotion, a devotion directed to the formless Lord, is the vital response required of all who have perceived the presence of God suffused throughout creation, and in whom has been awakened a longing for union with Him. It is at this point that Guru Nanak shares with the sants a particular debt to vaishnava bhagti."[143]

"Bhakti", says Loehlin, "indicates the worshipper's

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141. Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion, p.208.

142. Cf. Ibid., pp.208-13.

143. Ibid., p.213.

attitude of loving devotion towards the Deity."[144] Grierson translates the word Bhakti as "adoration".[145] As we saw earlier in chapter III, Ramanuja raised the concept of bhakti 'out of the world of illusion' into a workable, intellectualized and ethical principle of divine worship, declaring open its efficacy to the public at large, while earlier it was only a "secret mantra of salvation."[146]

The ethical aspect of bhakti, with its ever-extending scope of reaching the masses and regarding them as equal in the eyes of God and man, became the special mark of Guru Nanak's mystical movement as it develpped in its final theocratic shape, and on this very point Guru Nanak radically diverged from his other compatriots, Kabir, Dadu, Chaitanya, Ramanand, Namdev and others. He laid special emphasis on the practical application of the idea of bhakti into Sangat and Pangat (i.e. Langar) which both at once, as if by a magical wand, equalized all men, high and low, rich and poor, in the newly-fashioned religious society of the Sikhs where no barrier whatsoever remained between man and man.[147]

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144. Sikhs and Their Scriptures, p.53. About the etymology of the word 'bhakti' Loehlin says: "The noun bhakti comes from the Sanskrit root bhaj meaning in its religious sense, 'attachement, fondness for, devotion to, trust, homage, worship, piety, faith or love or devotion'. (Monier Williams, Skrt, Dict.)". Loc. Cit. Cf. also G. S. Mansukhani, Guru Nanak World Teacher, p.76.

145. Loehlin, Loc. Cit.,

146. Ibid., pp.56 f.

147. For Langar Cf. Parkash Singh, Sikh Gurus and the Temple of Bread, pp.51, 54, 133. Mcleod, op. cit. p.210. For the institution of 'classless' society of the Khalsa Panth, see Bhai Gurdas, Var 1,23. "Making the four classes as four pillars of religion, Guru Nanak made one 'class' (varan) out of the four classes. Making the high and the low as equals, he started the cult of humility in the world."

As Loehlin observes, "The Sikh Gurus were both mystical devotees (bhakatas) and practical organizers, a combination that developed a religious refermed sect into a church and finally into a theocracy known as the Khalsa Brotherhood."[148]

Farquhar also highlights this speciality of Guru Nanak's thought, saying that Guru Nanak, like Kabir, "did not wish their followers to become ascetics but advised them to go on with their ordinary avocations."[149]

A modern Sikh writer says: "The most exciting and salient feature of Guru Nanak's religion is its emphasis on the ethical aspect of social life." Again: "The mysticism of Guru Nanak is creative and dynamic."[150]

The principle of love when combined with religious devotion and adoration certainly acquires a moral and ethical character. Mukerjee observes:

> "God's love is regarded as morally perfect with respect to its content in the world, which, however, can be infinitely enriched aesthetically in the social process." 151

Bhakti in which there is too much emotional effusion and has outward excercise such as ecstatic singing

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148. Op.cit., p.53.

149. Modern Religious Movements in India, p.336.

150. Darshan Singh, Religion of Guru Nanak, pp.38 and 64.

151. Theory and Art of Mysticism, Preface.

and dancing and orgiastic revelry[152] (which has been so common in the Bengali mystics (specially of Chaitanya Bhakti cult) and in the Alvar and Adiyar saint poets of Tamilnad, and also in the Sufi mystics of Chishti denomination and the Namdhari sect in Sikhism, is not akin to Guru Nanak's concept of Bhakti which takes more of inner form than outer.[153] This inner form is the 'inner love: the real longing of a chaste woman for her husband compared to the devotion of a Bhakat to the Divine Being.'[154]

The love principle is invariably conjoined to the sex instinct in the concept of Bhakti. Mukerjee observes that sex is most intimately related to art and religion because sex attraction easily leads to ecstatic contemplation which is also the essence of all love mysticism. Kierkegaard also finds the secret sources of love in the Eternal and the Infinite.[155]

Stanley Hall says: "No psychologist can fail to see that love of God and the libido have the same mechanisms and

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152. Guru Nanak says: "Dancing and jumping is mental enthusiasm." Var Asa, Slok AG., 465. Guru Nanak holds that such revelry has no spiritual value, it is mere sensual and worldly pleasure. He adds to the above-quoted line that "those who have fear in their heart, can have love inside." (Nachan kudan man ka chao. Nanak jin man bhau tina man bhao).

153. G. S. Mansukhani, Guru Nanak World Teacher, p. 77. For Chishti Sufis and sama' see, Subhan, Sufism, pp. 114, 216.

154. Loc. Cit.

155. Quoted in R. Mukerjee, op. cit., p. 128.

that religious and sex normality and abnormality are very much closely connected. 'Love rules the camp, the court, the grave, for love is God and God is love.'"[156]

In Guru Nanak's mysticism, this divine-human relationship of devotional love (Bhakti) became the most dominant expression for describing the intimate mystical union between God and man. Mukerjee says:

> "In the Guru Granth of the Sikhs we find the intimacy of spiritual love expressed also in terms of the earthly bride's wedding with the transcendental Lord." 157

Guru Nanak's mystic symbolism mainly revolves round this all-important human metaphor of sex-relationship, first as conceived and perfected between man and woman (as husband and wife) and, by analogous correspondence, applied to the spiritual relationship between God and man. Mcleod observes in this context:

> "There is in his works the characteristic Vaishnava emphasis upon the absolute necessity of love in the bhakti sense, commonly expressed in the figure of the bride yearning for her Beloved, the divine Bridegroom." 158

The mystical impulse in love consists in the appreciation and perception of beauty at its highest level of manifest divinity, and this mystical contact between love

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156. Quoted in Ibid., p.127. Cf.Guru Gobind Singh Swayyai: "Let every body hear this truth from me: those who loved God, they alone found Him." (Sach kahau sun leheo sabhe jin prem keo tin hi prabh paio) Cf. also Mohan Singh Uberoi, Sikh Mysticism,pp.44 and 52.

157. Op.cit.,p.173. Cf.S.Dasgupta,Hindu Mysticism,p.138. He calls Chaitanya's concept of Sakhya as the highest type of love.

158. Mcleod,op.cit. p.213. Cf.G.S.Talib, Guru Nanak; His Personality and Vision, pp.180 ff.

and beauty, with emphasis on suggestive contemplation rather than on realistic perception, is the basis of all symbolism in mystical literature.[159] Guru Nanak's symbolism can also be appropriately relative to this fundamental idea.

Dean Inge has emphatically pleaded the cause of love vis-a-vis ethos, saying that Christianity prefers love to goodness, because, as de Burgh says, when we say God is love it is not true merely "analogically" but directly. St. Clement remarks that faith leads to knowledge and knowledge to love.[160] St. Bernard says:

> "The perfect correspondence of wills makes of two one spirit ... love knows not reverence. Love is the great reality. It is the only affection of the soul in which the creature is able to respond to the creator." 161

Similarly, Origen avers: "The Father Himself is not impassable; he has the passion of love."[162]

The use of mystical symbols is an inevitable necessity. As Inge says: "even when we have to interpret the absolute values, we cannot dispense with symbols."[163]

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159. Cf. Inge, Mysticism in Religion, Chap. 'Symbolism and Myth' Defining a 'symbol', he says: "A symbol is a representation of some moral or spiritual truth under the form of natural things. Its object is suggestion or insight; it is a kind of language. Images are taken from natural relations and used to express more universal or ideal relations. The symbol is the indirect presentation of a concept which cannot be presented directly."
160. Ibid., p. 72.
161. Loc. Cit.
162. Loc. Cit.
163. Ibid., p. 76. Cf. Dewan Singh, Farid Darshan, p. 139. Ghalib's verse quoted: "However mysticially we may have to talk about divine experience itself, we cannot do without using the symbols of wine and the cup."

In the Bhakti mysticism, which is akin to the Christian '<u>Voluntaristic</u> mysticism', as Otto remarks, "even the Highest is thought of as responding to amorous longings."[164] This the true mystical concept underlying all Vaishnava Bhakti and also Guru Nanak's love mysticism.[165]

Love is a giving out of one's inner self to the world abroad. It is thus basically ethical in nature and truth. Eckhart says: "What we have gathered in contemplation, we give out in love."[166]

Quoting Guru Nanak viz. "Altruism is the essence of all knowledge"[167] a modern Sikh writer says: "It is the complete socialization of the person, indicated through his love and concern for others."[168]

The true assence of love-mysticism seems to be the complete unification of the divine will and the individualistic human will. Fichte remarks on this issue:

> "No longer two wills but one and the same will is all in all. So long as man desires to be something himself, God does not come to him, for no man (qua man and creature) can become God. But so soon as he destroys his own self

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164. <u>Mysticism East and West</u>. p.30. Cf. Guru Nanak, <u>Ramkali Oankar</u>, 29, <u>AG</u>.,933. "Lord is one, all else are women." (<u>Thakar ek sabai nar</u>).

165. Mcleod, <u>op.cit</u>.,p.214.

166. Quoted in Otto, <u>op.cit</u>.,p.207. Cf. Mohan Singh Uberoi, <u>Sikh Mysticism</u>, p.37.

167. <u>Asa</u>, <u>AG</u>.,356. (<u>Vidya vichari ta parupkari</u>), trans. Avtar Singh, <u>Ethics of the Sikhs</u>, p.188.

168. Avtar Singh, <u>Loc. Cit</u>.

> purely and wholly and to the very root, God alone remains and is all in all." 169

This luminous statement is the crux not only of Guru Nanak's love-mysticism, but of his whole mysticism, because he has enunciated as the very first principle of his thought in Japji (Stanza One) the universal truth of abnegating human will to the supreme divine will. This constitutes his most important and profound concept of Hukam.

Guru Nanak has laid down that only those who will obey the Lord and have fear in their hearts, will acquire love for the Divine Being.[170] He has devoted, besides other references, one full drawn-out hymn (with exquisite poetic beauty to match it), in Rag Tilang, to clarify his well-known thesis, so richly couched in love-symbolism of Bride and Bridegroom (suhagan and sauh), that complete submission and dedication to Divine will is the only course open to man to seek and achieve union with the Lord. The hymn opens with the colourful imagery: "The Lord is near at hand (within you), foolish bride, why seek Him without?"[171] and the whole thought culminates in the following beautiful lines:

> "Fix your mind on His feet (cleave to Him), through whose love the priceless treasure is obtained. Do whatever He says. Anoint yourself with the perfume of total surrender to Him.' Thus replies the bride, 'O sister, by this means the Lord is found." 172

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169. Quoted in Otto, op.cit. p.229.

170. Cf. Mcleod, op.cit.,pp.213-14. He refers to Guru Nanak's hymns Gauri 1, AG.,151 and Tilang 4, AG.722.

171. Tilang 4, AG, 722. Trans. Mcleod, op.cit.,p.214.

172. Trans. Mcleod, Loc.Cit. Cf. Mohan Singh Uberoi, Sikh Mysticism, p.1. "In Sikh Mysticism the lover and the Beloved unite in Love and this is their union..."

Guru Nanak's basic difference with traditional bhakti is on two points viz. his "explicit rejection of avatars", as Mcleod says, and addressing his devotion to the non-incarnated, supreme God Himself, and, secondly, his "understanding of the practical expression of love", through the constant meditation of nam simran and nam japan.[173]

Guru Nanak's love mysticism is the most explicit and positive postulation of his whole religious thought. All the negative postulates of maya, duja bhav (otherness), dubidha (duality), haumai (ego or self-centredness), sansa or sehsa (doubt), bharam (superstition) and bhulekha (fallacy), vishe vikar (sensual desires or the five low impulses), durmat (low sensibility) bad birodh[174] (garrulousness· friction), jam ka taras (fear of death) and so on, at once fade into nothingness before the refulgent illumination of devotional love practically apotheosized in the form of Nam and Sabad. When there is sun of truth shining at its zenith, how can any darkness remain even for a moment?

Devotional love in Guru Nanak finds its natural concomitants in recitation of Name (nam simran), constant rememberance of sabad in the form of Gurmantar (the Guru-ordained formula, i.e. Wahiguru) and Mulmantar (Credal Statement about God, prefaced to the Adi Granth), acquisition of positive ethical virtues of truth, charity, forbearance,

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173. Loc. Cit.

174. Cf. Maru, AG., 1025.

contentment, continence, tolerance, forgiveness, humility, purity, and equanimity (respectively, sat, daya, sahnshilta, santokh, jat, dhiraj, khima, nimarta, such and sambudhhta), and persistent resort to congregational music (kirtan).[175] Above all else, love mysticism exalts the highest virtue known to man (it is so much divine), i.e. complete selflessness which expresses itself in regarding sorrow and happiness, riches and poverty, grief and pleasure, honour and disgrace, life and death as without distinction, as one and the same thing. This is the highest state, called Sahaj which one can attain to.

G. S. Mansukhani writes:

> "The Bhakat takes every thing in his stride: happiness and sorrow, honour and dishonour, hope and despair, with equanimity, because God is behind it. The State of the devotee is that of a child, pure and innocent, willing to give all and surrender every thing at the feet of the Master ... It is the insatiable desire of the fish for the water, the desire of the chatrik for the rain, of the moth for the flame." 176

Whereas on the spiritual plane nam simran has been regarded as the best devotional act by Guru Nanak, specially in the early morning hour,[177] though it has ultimately to

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175. For the meaning of Kirtan, see G. S. Mansukhani, op. cit. p. 67. For the value of music see Thoreau, quoted in Will Durant, Mansions of Philosophy, p. 292.

176. Op. cit., p. 78.

177. Cf. Guru Nanak, Japji, 4, AG., 2. "In the morning ambrosial hour, recite true Name and ponder over the greatness of God. "(Amrit Vela sach nao vadiai vichar). Again: "Praise the Lord in the morning, for those who meditated on Him with single mind, they are the perfect heroes, because they did not let slip the time (for prayer) at the pain of death." Var Majh, Slok, AG, 145.

become the second nature of the devotee in the form of ajapa-jap (i.e. "unuttered utterance)"[178] on the ethical plane, charity in the form of feeding the hungry,[179] and showing utmost loving attention to the poorest among the poor[180] have been strongly inculcated as the greatest human virtues.

The Sikh mystic discipline has often been associated with the threefold concept of Nam-dan-ishnan.[181] Nam has already been discussed in detail.[182] It purports to be the

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178. Cf. Mcleod calls it "the interiorising of the utterance" of Nam and also "exposing one's total being to its deepest meanings." He further says that it is rememberance of God on man, bach, karam level i.e. in thought, word and deed. Op.cit., pp.216 f. Cf. also S. S. Kohli, Outlines of Sikh Thought, p.98. and Gopal Singh, Religion of the Sikhs, p.62.

179. Cf. W.T. Stace, Mysticism and philosophy, p.338. "It is better to feed the hungry than to see even such visions as St. Paul saw. "Cf. also Parkash Singh, Sikh Gurus and the Temple of Bread, p.133.

180. Cf. Guru Nanak, Siri, AG., 15. "The lowest among the low-caste and even the extremely low among them are those with whom Nanak wants to associate as he has no affinity with the rich people where the poor are looked after, there dawns your grace and favour, O Lord."

181. Cf. Sorath, AG., 596. For the meaning of these terms see Teja Singh and others, Shabdarath Siri Guru Granth Sahib, Vol.II, p.596, f.n. 6. Cf. also Bhai Vir Singh Rana Surat Singh, pp. 204-209. and Puran Singh, Spirit Born People, pp.150 f.

182. See supra Chap. V. and Chap. VI (in the discussion of Sabad.).

inner, mystical aspect of Guru Nanak's religion, which is the basic aspect and the most important. Dan is sharing one's earning with others (wand chhakna)[183] and thus it represents the ethical principle in Sikhism. It is not mere conventional charity but has been freshly interpreted in the light of Guru Nanak's mystical thought.[184] Dan is actually showing sympathy to the whole world, which has been popularly called sarbat ka bhala and is daily uttered in the end of the Sikh Prayer (ardas). Dan is not just giving alms to the poor, which can be hypocritical and formal. In the real sense according to Guru Nanak, dan is, firstly, not to grab or usurp another's right or possession (i.e. haq paraya) which is termed as haram (taboo or prohibited). Guru Nanak warns such 'usurpers' (who in his own times were legion, under the easy garb of religion):

> 'That which belongs to another is unlawful like the flesh of pig to the Muslim and cow's flesh to the Hindu.
>
> The Guru and Peer will extend their grace only if one refrains from eating carrion." 185

Guru Nanak has shown strongest condemnation for the exploiter and usurper of others' rights. He compares it to

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183. Cf.Teja Singh, Shabdarath, Vol.II,p.596, f.n.6. This term has been popularized by Bhai Vir Singh in his writings, specially in Baba Naudh Singh pp.21-23, used along with nam japna and dharam di kirat karni, which latter means 'earning honest living'.

184. Cf.Bhai Vir Singh, Rana Surat Singh, pp.205 f. He has divided dan into dehi (physical), man (mental) and chit (spiritual) kind of charity.

185. Var Majh, Slok, AG., 140. (Haq paraya Nanaka us suar us gai. Gur pir hama ta bhare ja murdar na khai).

eating carrion (murdar). How can the Guru help a man who eats dead bodies, and is worse than a cannibal? Secondly, dan implies not to hurt the feelings of others. Daya-taras (mercy), khima (forgiveness), and dhiraj (tolerance, forbearance) are the most prized virtues in Guru Nanak's ethics. Ishnan is purification, physical, mental and spiritual. It is the daily ablution in the morning, then 'washing' the mind with Nam and sabad[186] and accepting Divine Will (Hukam) at all hours, which is spiritual ablution.

SAHAJ AND ANHAD: ESOTERIC MYSTICISM

The conception of Sahaj and Anhad is the most mystical in Guru Nanak's thought. Hence it may be called 'Esoteric-mysticism'. Whereas other types of Guru Nanak's mysticism viz. God-mysticis, Sou-mysticism, Nature-mysticism and Love-mysticism, which have all been discussed earlier, are sufficiently understandable and analyzable in human thought and language, the Esoteric-mysticism is almost ineffable, because the purely mystical states of Sahaj and Anhad are truly known only to the experients of these states.[187] Guru Nanak himself, having experienced directly the blissful union

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186. Cf. Guru Amar Dass, Ramkali Anand, 18, AG.,919. "Clean your mind by reciting sabad and continue remembering God in your mind." See also Bhai Vir Singh, Rana Surat Singh, pp.204 f. for the kinds of ishnan.

187. Cf. Guru Arjan, Sukhmani, 16, AG.,285. "Absorbed in wonder (vismad) they became wonder itself. Those who knew Him, enjoyed the bliss." For anhad, see Mohan Singh, Sikh Mysticism, p.47.

with God and the concomitant divine manifestations attending such Beatitude, has mystically expressed these visions in symbolical language, incorporating and using esoteric terms already current in Vedanta or Yoga mysticism and in higher Buddhism,[188] investing them with new meanings.

As Niharranjan Ray says:

> "... in whichever manner one seeks to describe the Sahaj experience, its real nature must elude understanding in humanly communicable language. The articulation of an experience which was essentially a mystical one and hence, according to Guru Nanak himself, was incapable of being translated in communicable terms, was indeed beyond human expression, had necessarily to be in traditional mystical terms made current and somewhat understandable by his predecessors belonging to various mystic orders of sants and sadhus, and in well-known traditional symbols and images that had some meaning, howsoever vague and generalized, to those whom his words were addressed to." 189

In order to consider the concept of sahaj in its mystical connotation, it would be useful first to study its etymological meaning. Sahaj is originally a Sanskrit word which means 'having been born together' (just as human 'twins'),[190] and thus something inwardly perceived or intuited along with one's birth as a human being -- a sort of indwelling mystical principle of divine perception given to man as his birthright

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188. Cf. Mcleod, Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion, pp. 191 f. Cf. also Niharranjan Ray, Sikh Gurus and the Sikh Society, pp. 125, 127. Cf. Prem Parkash Singh, Guru Nanak ate Nirgundhara, pp. 82-83.

189. Sikh Gurus and the Sikh Society, p. 120.

190. See MK, 103. Bhai Kahn Singh has given thirteen meanings of the term, but the import which dominantly emerges is that of 'something natural, indwelling, spontaneous and inborn'.

and, therefore, a natural and effortless heritage of divinity ingrained in humanity.[191]

Properly speaking, sahaj is the very 'mysticality' (to use a new term) of religion. It is the acceptance of inwardness and 'intuitionism' as the true basis of religion, to the negation of all ritualistic externalities.[192]

In Guru Nanak's thought, sahaj, comes to imply the acceptance of Hukam as the first cardinal principle of Sikhism.[193] Sahaj in this meaning would be the mystical state of a man who has accepted the divine Will (Hukam, Bhana, Raza). Sahaj, thus, is the highest spiritual state attainable in Sikhism, It is the highest bliss.

Another writer on Guru Nanak defining sahaj says:

> "The word 'sahaj' means natural fulfilment. Just as vegetables cooked over a slow fire retain their flavour, in the same way gradual and voluntary discipline of the mind and body will bring out the essential goodness inherent in the individual."[194]

In the meaning expressed above Sahaj connotes a natural slowness and steadiness required for perfect action. Haste makes waste, has been truely said, Sahaj is the opposite

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191. Cf. Rattan Singh Jaggi, Guru Nanak di Vichardhara,(Panjabi), p.415, for etymology from: "Sah jayte iti sahaj." See also Niharranjan Ray, op.cit., p.123.

192. Cf. Niharranjan Ray, op.cit., p.117.

193. Cf.Guru Nanak, Japji, 1, AG.,1. "To walk in the umbrage of Divine will, as, says Nanak, ordained in the spirit itself." (Hukam rajai chalana Nanak likhia nal).

194. G.S.Mansukhani, Guru Nanak World Teacher, p.87., with f.n. 2, referece to Khushwant Singh, History of Sikhs, Vol.1. p.45.

of inordinate haste. Sahaj is compactness and self-sufficiency, while haste is flipancy and inner weakness. A sure man is the 'poised' man. In this anthropomorphic sense (as distinct from the mystical one, discussed earlier), Sahaj would mean equipoise, equanimity and equilibrium. It may be called "balanced perpicacity" or sambuddhata, in the psychological sense.[195]

All true balance and true action (which may be called Sahaj-karam, as distinct from the self-willed action) engender aesthetic as well as spiritual pleasure, while spiritual fulfilment produces infinite bliss. Guru Amar Dass (the third Guru Nanak) who has provided the most explicit and candid exposition of the term Sahaj in his popular composition called Ramkali Anand, declares, as if from the housetop, that with the Grace of the Guru, he has attained the supreme bliss (anand):

> "True bliss has dawned on me O my mother, for I have found the Guru.
>
> The Guru has been found through sahaj and my mind is full of joyous melodies.
>
> The precious 'unstruck melodies' have come in to sing the praises of the Lord.
>
> Sing the praises of the Lord, O brethern, for He has come to dwell in the mind.
>
> Nanak says, true bliss has dawned, for I have found the Guru. 196

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195. See James Drever, A Dictionary of Psychology, p. 209. Perspicacity is 'acute or clear understanding'.

196. Ramkali Anand, 1, AG., 917.

According to Guru Amar Dass, as is evident from the above mystical confession, the grace of the Guru which consists in the providential 'meeting' or contact with the Guru, is the sure concomitant of Sahaj. Guru Amar Dass, as Sikh history shows, found the true Guru after great difficulty and in comparatively later years of his life. Hence he was deeply conscious of the bliss of such prodigious achievement. In another hymn[197] in his Ramkali Anand, he clearly expounds the nature and truth of Sahaj, concluding that it is produced by the grace of the Guru:

> "Sahaj cannot be produced by actions and without Sahaj doubt does not vanish.
>
> Doubt is cast away by no other method, many people tried by performing (endless) actions.
>
> In the state of doubt the soul is polluted, how can we clean it?
>
> Clean your mind by reciting sabad and continue remembering God in the mind.
>
> Nanak says, by the grace of the Guru alone Sahaj is produced and, thus, the doubt is removed."

Sahaj, which is "the state of enlightenment achieved through self-discipline"[198] has been generally accepted to be "the ultimate goal which the religious and spiritual discipline laid down by Guru Nanak was supposed to lead to."[199] Hence this

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197. Ibid., 18 AG, 919.

198. G.S.Talib, Guru Nanak: His Personality and Vision, p.201.

199. Niharranjan Ray, op.cit.,p.117. Cf. also J.S.Grewal Guru Nanak in History, p.273.

term has been used to denote the ineffable union with God. Various expressions have been current as synonymous with Sahaj, such as Sunn-samadh, turia avastha,[200] chautha pad, amar pad, param pad, maha-sukh, param anand, dasam duar, anhad nad, sach khand, jiwan-mukti and so on.[201] The term sahaj-samadh has also been used by kabir and the Sikh Gurus.[202]

All this terminology connected with Sahaj was commonly used by all the Nirgun-sampradaya saints, Kabir, Namdev, Dadu, and others, along with Guru Nanak, having borrowed it from the sahajayani Buddhists (who in their turn inherited it from the earlier Mahayana-vajravana Buddhist tradition) and also from Tantric Hathayoga and the Nathpanthi-Kanphata yogis with whom Guru Nanak came into directand close contact. The Sahajiya Vaishnavas and Bauls of Bengal also adopted this esoteric terminology.[203]

The patent meaning of Sahaj has been the abnegation of duality and the perception of unity in God as well as the creation. This unitive state or the Sunn state which means Vacuity or Devoidness,[204] is also the primordial state of the

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200. J. S. Grewal, Loc. Cit.

201. Niharranjan Ray, op.cit., pp. 118 f.

202. Ibid., p. 122.

203. Ibid., pp. 121, 122, 127.

204. "The Supreme ultimate Devoidness (Mahasunn) which is the fifth sunn of Tibetan mystics and Sunyatita of the Saivites." Mohan Singh Uberoi, Sikh Mysticism, p. 20. Cf. Paul Brunton calls it 'the void' or 'the Supernal Empty'. Spiritual Crisis of Man, p. 132.

Nirgun Brahm Himself. Mohan Singh Uberoi describes the Sikh Sahaja Yoga as 'unification with Self through cultivation of a state of natural, easy self-Hold, self-Rest." Again: "Sunn is a state in which there is no movement, in the receptacle, of any type, no sound, no wind, no object or objectivity; the subject, God, is there as the container, the presence."[205]

Guru Nanak has copiously used esoteric terms and expressions such as sunn, anhad, shiv-shakti, trikuti, unman sas-ghar-sur, bajar-kapat, ira-pingla-sukhmana, ajapa jap, dasamduar, dhundhukar-niralam, sache amarapur, sachi nagari, bij-mandar, sunn-kala, satsur, panch-sabad, akul niranjan, purakh-atit, gagnantar dhanakh, Sunn-samadh, bis-ikis, dub-mue-vin pani, surat-dhun, nijghar, guptibani, anhat sunn, and surat sabad, in all his compositions, specially in Ragas, Ramkali and Maru. These are purely mystical terms common to all Indian religions.

As Niharranjan Ray observes,[206] Guru Nanak's use of these tantric and Yogic terms does not logically follow that he actually practiced or inculcated their practice among his followers, because he has used them only as figures of speech or technical esoteric terms which were current and handy for use and were generally understood among advanced mystical orders of his time. He had had actually many discussions during his

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205. Ibid., p.4.

206. Op.cit., pp.132 ff.

travels and at Kartarpur with Yogis, Sadhus and ascetics of various mystical cults and denominations.

Guru Nanak, in fact, had his own mystical message to convey to humanity and it was original with him and had no conceptual reference to the mystical philosophies of Saivites, vaishnavites, Yogis and even to Kabir, Dadu, Namdev and others, though many of them were accepted as allied co-mystics and their compositions included in the Adi Granth, more with a view to illustration and elaboration than to identification and syncretism.

The achievement of Sahaj-avastha in the form of maha-sukha or jiwan-mukti, which was the ultimate goal of all the mystical cults using esoteric terms concurrently during Guru Nanak's times, was to Guru Nanak a matter of inner discipline and direct experiential contact with divine Reality. Mere esoteric niceties or intricacies, specially of Tantric Yoga were quite alien to his mystic temperament which was fundamentally dynamic, ethical and synthetic.

N.Ray remarks in this context:

> "God-experience is an inner experience; one must therefore, cleanse and purify one's inner being. How does one do it? Guru Nanak's clear answer is, by loving devotion and adoration of God and by endless repetition and remembering of His Name, Nam simran." 207.

Summing up, this eminent scholar says:

> "Guru Nanak's position and statements are precise, clear and unequivocal and their ethical import and socio-religious significance deep and wide." 208

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207. Ibid., p.138.

208. Ibid., p.139.

Guru Nanak's mystic thought is easily distinguishable from the Natha-panthi and Kanphata yogi cults, as also from Tantrism, Vaishnavism and Shaivism, though a general fallacy exists to equate or identify it with Kabir's mysticism. But as Mcleod has lucidly discussed, much of Kabir's mystical jargon remains obscure and personal whereas Guru Nanak's postulation especially of the mystic path and discipline is clearer and more cogent than that of Kabir.[209]

Concluding his analysis of Guru Nanak's mystical contribution to Indian religious thought as represented by Sant Tradition (i.e. Nirgun-samparadaya-tradition), Mcleod says:[210]

> "The system developed by Guru Nanak is essentially a reworking of the Sant pattern, a reinterpretation which compounded experience and profound insight with a quality of coherence and a power of effective expression."

There is much inconsistency and incoherence in Kabir's thought, as Ray observes, from which Guru Nanak's mysticism is absolutely free, with the result that whereas it is difficult if not impossible to construct a theology out of what Kabir says, it is not so with Guru Nanak. "He was also a mystic, but his mysticism was limited to the final goal of sahaj experience which at the ultimate analysis was a mystical, ineffable, unanalysable, inexpressible

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209. Mcleod, op.cit.,pp.150. 157 Cf. also Niharranjan, op.cit. p.58.

210. Ibid., p.151.

experience."[211]

Another eminent writer observes:

"The Sahaja Yoga, according to the Guru, consists in subduing the mind through the grace of the Guru and in the extinction of all troubles and ills in the company of the Guru and the saints. This is the Bhakti Yoga of the Guru." 212.

Among the more technical esoteric (Tantric) terms may be included the 'chhat-chakra' or the six nerve-plexuses, the kundalini, the sahansar-dal kanwal, the sas-sur-complex, the dasam-duar, the opening of bajar-kapat or trikuti. These are the well-known yogic terms which Guru Nanak adopted and reinterpreted to suit his own mystic realization. They are, thus, of illustrative value.

The idea of the immersion of 'sun' in the house of 'moon' (sas ghar sur samauna)[213] is typically mystical and has been adopted by Guru Nanak to express the subservience of the creative energy (called shakti - the female symbol) to the spiritual element (called shiva - the male symbol). The sun and moon also stand for the right and left nerve channels (called ira and pingla, respectively) of the Hathayoga.[214]

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211. Op.cit.,p.59.

212. S.S.Kohli, Philosophy of Guru Nanak, p.72. Cf. Rattan Singh Jaggi, Guru Nanak di Vichardhara, p.444.

213. Guru Nanak, Maru Dhakhni, AG.,1033. and Maru, AG.,1041.

214. Cf. Niharranjan Ray, op.cit.,p.128 f. and Rattan Singh Jaggi, Guru Nanak di Vichardhara, p.400. As Ray says, the male principle is symbolized by the male sperm (bind), which the female principle is ever eager to consume.

Connecting the allied states of Sahaj and Anhad

N.Ray says:

> "Apart from the characteristics of peace and tranquility, of wonderment and bliss and of ineffable radiance by which one recognized the sahaj state of being, Guru Nanak recognized another, that of anahad Sabad, an unstruck sound which he used to experience within himself at that ultimate state of being." 215

While sahaj is the highest blissful state attainable by man as a result of mystic discipline and realization, anhad is the mystical expression of that radient state in terms of divine music esoterically heard within the soul and which the experient only knows in his own experience and cannot describe in human language.

Guru Nanak has treated both these terms with subtle variation of thought and nuance. To give a few instances would be useful.

About Sahaj:

1. "We came by sahaj and left by Hukam: Nanak, there is eternal obedience (to God)" 216

2. "By hearing the Name, one attains sahaj contemplation." 217

3. "By hearing Guru's word, one attains sahaj contemplation." 218

4. "Those who apprehended Him, they recognized the Sahaj. When I pondered over this, my mind was appeased." 219.

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215. Op.cit.,p.119. Cf. also Mcleod, op.cit.,p.225. Mcleod calls Sahaj as "the ineffable radiance beyond the dasam duar.

216. Siddh-gosht, 3, AG., 938.

217. Japji, 10, AG., 3.

218. Siddh-Gosht, 41, AG.,942.

219. Gauri Guarari, AG., 221.

5. "One who met the Lord in Sahaj, was accepted.
He has neither death nor rebirth." 220

6. "In fear one found the Fearless. Then he entered
the house of Sahaj." 221

7. "To see Nature, to hear Gurbani, and to utter
your true Name. Thus the treasure of honour
was filled and we got Sahaj contemplation." 222

8. "O Yogi, consider the essencewith Sahaj. In this
way you will not be reborn in this world." 223

About Anhad:

1. "If one bears the unbearable, it means closing
the nine doors. By controlling vital organs,
the body becomes eternal." 224

2. "Mind is not purified in the tenth Door. The fool
thus, is born again and again in superstition." 225

3. "The true and contented sabad is extremely cool
and in sahaj the attention got fixed. The Lord
created three gunas and Himself lived in the
Fourth State. He made birth and death as one
mouthful. The refulgent light of the Life-of-
All Lord (sarab jag jiwan) was manifested by
Guru as anhad sabad.." 226

4. "The Maker has made the nine doors. In the Tenth
(door) lives the Unseen-Beyond lord." 227

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220. Dhanasari, AG.,686.

221. Sorath, AG., 599.

222. Basant, AG., 1168.

223. Parbhati, AG., 1328.

224. Var Malar, Slok, AG., 1289

225. Basant, AG., 1188.

226. Maru, AG., 1038.

227. Maru, AG., 1036.

5. "The nine doors overflowing, the Tenth is full. Then the 'unstruck sound' creates melodies."228

6. "By getting birth into the Guru's house, the wandering ended. By getting absorbed in the anhad (sabad), this mind was appeased." 229

7. "The air resounds and the ether roars. Nanak, the eternal union comes through sahaj." 230

8. "The anhad sabad is struck day and night. The state of the Eternal Lord was known through the Word of the Guru." 231

In the end, the difference between Guru Nanak's concept of anhad and that of the Yogis may be elucidated. The Guru's anhad is attained through sabad-surat or Nam meditation, while the Yogis try to achieve it through Hathayoga discipline.[232] The one is God-oriented, the other self-oriented. Guru Nanak's Esoteric mysticism is thus spontaneously evolved and not syncretically borrowed. It is, in fact, infinitely superior to the Yogic and Tantric cults in the sense of adherence to natural laws of life and the Spirit and also to the ethical principles of behaviour and conduct.

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228. Siddh-gosht,53, AG., 943.

229. Ibid.,20, AG., 940.

230. Ibid., 51, AG., 943.

231. Ramkali, AG., 404.

232. Cf. Rattan Singh Jaggi, op. cit., p.406.

CHAPTER VII

C O N C L U S I O N

The first concern in the thesis under study is to ascertain and define mysticism as a higher branch of human knowledge and experience and in doing so, to verify and establish its nature and characteristics.

Having recourse to the process of elimination, the foremost point of discussion is to recognize two types of mysticism, the higher and the lower and to state at once that our concern in this thesis is with the former.

Though it is easy to distinguish the higher mysticism from the lower, the latter being the corrupt or aberrant form and thus not mysticism proper, yet it is not enough to envisage and emphasize this distinction between the religious and the psychical mysticism.

The real question involved is to distinguish mysticism from its kindred and allied fields. Our next point of study relates to this matter. Mysticism is a subject of study in its own right. It is a suigeneris. It may have some common and corresponding points of similarity with Psychology, Spiritualism, Metaphysics, Philosophy and Religion, but it is not difficult to find out points of variance and divergence between mysticism on the one hand and these allied fields on the other.

The nearest approach to mysticism, however, is the hightened or interiorized aspect of religion, which may be called inner religion or mystical religion.

Then the problem of the indefinability of mysticism has to be tackled. There have been advanced numberless

definitions and countless notions and view-points in connection with this recondite subject. Some authorities have emphasized the intellectual or cognitive aspect while other have highlighted the emotional or esoteric aspect. These are, however, the two main areas of approach. But within this wide range, there are myriads of ramifications relevant to the subject. From the plethora of these paradoxical and divergent view-points, it has been possible to devise and distinguish the various types of mysticism.

The quintessence of the research pursued in this study of the theory of mysticism can be briefly stated to comprise in the intuitional faculty inherent in more or less degree in all human beings (it is highest, of course, in some extraordinary persons called 'mystics' and in their original, incisive 'mystical experience'), which may also be described as a higher insight or a higher feeling — a sort of divine contemplation or an ecstatic condition of the 'psyche' or the soul.

As to the types of mysticism, the main types are two, the Extrovertive and the Introvertive which may also be named as Emotional and Intellectual. There are, however, other distinguishable types, the chief among them being Love mysticism, Nature mysticism, God mysticism, Soul mysticism, Esoteric mysticism and if we include the Indian types, Bhakti mysticism and Yoga mysticism. (Chapter I).

The inevitability of mystical experience as a paramount source of mystical thought or realization, in fact of all mysticism as such, is a foregone conclusion. A mystic

must have empirical mystic experience to his credit if he is to be mystic proper. The varieties of mystical experience have been ascertained by great authorities like William James. The spiritual state (called samadhi, rapture or ecstasy) in which mystical experience takes place, is all-important. It is absolutely ineffable and transcendental though efforts have been made to describe it in human language and on intellectual level -- of course, very tentatively. (Chapter II).

Every mystic has to accept a mystical heritage or background, though as a mystic he transcends the bounds of Time, Space and causation. Guru Nanak's mysticism accordingly has to be correlated with and studied in the context of the rich Indian mystic tradition. Guru Nanak may have intuitively inherited or assimilated some of the fundamental principles of Indian mysticism (a postulate which cannot be intellectually perceived or ascertained), yet it can be positively suggested and affirmed that Guru Nanak was not an eclectic or syncretic mystic, but a mystic in his own right.

The Indian mystic tradition beginning with the Upanishadic and Vedanta mysticism (which may be called the fundamental matrix of all Indian mysticism, ancient and modern) gradually passed through an historical evolutionary pageant comprising Bhagavadgita mysticism, Yoga mysticism Bhakti mysticism and Sufi mysticism. Guru Nanak's mysticism, as suggested by Dr. Mcleod, can be properly placed in the

historical and spiritual context of the Nirgun-Sant tradition which evinced a close affinity with the Nath-Yoga mysticism and the Bhakti mysticism on the one hand and with Sufi mysticism on the other.

Guru Nanak, however, steered his mystical path clear of all these earlier and contemporary cults and in many respects, evolved and constructed an original mystical system of his own to match his own peculiar conditions within his soul as well as outside, in his particular milieu.

Guru Nanak's mysticism may be regarded as predominantly a Devotional (Bhakti) or Love mysticism, though it has also many other manifestations such as God mysticism, Nature mysticism, Soul mysticism, and Esoteric mysticism. (Chapter III).

The real problem, however, starts with the study of Guru Nanak as a mystic. It basically involves consideration of the person or personality of Guru Nanak as a Fakir or Wali, Sant or Bhagat, Guru or Gurmukh, Hero or Teacher, God-man or Perfect-man and above all, as a mystic. The Historical Nanak has to be distinguished from the Nanak of Legend and Faith. Guru Nanak's person posited a great historical fact and a potent religious challenge. Four aspects of his unique mystical personality are recognizable viz. 1. As a God-man, 2. As a miracle-working saint, 3. As a social and ethical thinker and 4. As a poet. Many great religious and literary authorities in the times immediately following his own and also in later and recent times, clearly recognized Guru Nanak's mystical genius and

paid reverent homage to his exalted self. (Chapter IV).

Coming to the main argument in the thesis viz. the treatment and exposition of the mystical concepts of Guru Nanak, it may be said that the relevant concepts can be arranged into two parts or groups i.e., those falling under the heading God mysticism or Mystic Ground and those coming under the title Soul mysticism or Mystic Path. The one set comprises 'the goal', the other 'the way'.

The Transcendent Godhead (Nirgun Brahm) being the source and origin of all mysticism, East and West, is the most crucial mystical concept of Guru Nanak. He calls this Nirgun Brahm by various names such as Nirankar, Niranjan, Nirbhau, Nirvair, Akal Murat, Ajuni and so on (these are negational or nakaratamak names) and also by positive or savikaratamak names such as Wahiguru, Ek-oankar, Sat-nam Saibhang, and so on. But the Nirgun (Attributeless) Brahm is not merely Nirgun. He is also Sargun (with-attributes) Brahm and according to Dr. Jairam Mishr, He is also Nirgun-Sargun-complex.

The transition from Nirgun to Sargun Brahm (i.e. the Creator-God) is through the 'involutionary' or 'emanatory' process (a theory propounded by Plotinus) which may be called the creational transformation or transfiguration within Divinity itself. According to Guru Nanak, this mystical change is called the three-pronged magic (tribidh maya). The universe is created through the agency of maya which is the

principle of individual assertion or Ego (haumai). Unless one transcends the effect of maya by uniting with the saving Divinity, he is eternally lost and discarded.

The principle of creation through maya is all Divine Order (Hukam) which is almost identifiable with the absolute power of God Himself. It is also designated as Divine Name (Nam). Nam and Hukam are often interchangeable terms (as Dr. J.S.Grewal says) with the conceptual distinction of Hukam being primarily the creational and determinative (involutionary) aspect of God's absolute power, and Nam being the saving, redeeming, evolutionary aspect of Godhead, which is basically operative and relevant on the human plane of existence.

The apex of divine creation, as depicted by Guru Nanak, lies in the Five Mystical Regions which correspond to the mystical states within the experient mystic. Guru Nanak's Nature mysticism deals with divine Infinitude as well as divine Beatitude. (Chapter V).

Then the Mystic Path. It is the Yoga discipline of Guru Nanak's mysticism. The Path consists mainly of Devotional Love (Bhakti) or Love mysticism. But the Path also connotes other relevant aspects such as Guru and Sabad, Grace (nadar) and Free-will, Ego (Haumai) and Duality (dubidha) and so on.

The Guru is the pivotal figure or the cornerstone of Guru Nanak's mysticism. The Guru is not merely a human preceptor or guide, but is actually the divine principle operant on human level. Guru Nanak as Guru is thus a

divinely-incarnated or a divinely-appointed person. He perpetuated himself by a process of mystical "transfusion" into nine successor-Gurus and then in the form of Sabad into Guru Granth or the Revealed Word. The Guru saves man eternally with the saving agency of the Sabad or Bani. This redemption, however, is not on individual basis but in the form of congregation (called Sadh sangat). Guru Nanak's mysticism is basically ethical, the truest expression of which lies in his well-known concepts of Nam, Dan and Ishnan.

The innermost aspect of Guru Nanak's mysticism called Esoteric mysticism is the culminating point. The divine ecstatic bliss (anand) is called Sahaj and is the highest mystical state achievable. It has many divine expressions or concomitants to match it, the chief among them being Anhad (or divine music) which is mystically conjoined with Sahaj. The mystery of Anhad (and also of Sahaj) is known only to the divinely-favoured mystic experient. Others can never know it. Guru Nanak himself epitomized in his exalted person all the mystical aspects revealed by him as Mystic Ground or as Mystic Path. (Chapter VI).

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